





Cult ruling: Judge refuses custody claim for three-year-old after assurances that sect's links with sex abuse have been broken

# Grandmother loses battle for 'child of God'

REBECCA FOWLER

A grandmother has lost her battle for custody of her three-year-old grandson to his mother, a member of the controversial Children of God sect now known as the Family, after leaders of the movement assured a High Court judge its abusive and sex-obsessed past had been buried.

In a ruling handed down yesterday, Lord Justice Ward accepted the 28-year-old mother's claims that the sect, which has 9,000 members worldwide, had genuinely denounced the pornographic teachings of its

original leader, David Berg, in new guidelines. The Family was notorious for excessive sexual behaviour including sharing spouses, encouraging prostitution to win new members (known as "flirty fishing"), and exposing children to violent beatings and sex.

"They have come in from the cold," Lord Justice Ward said. "They carry some mud on their coat, but if they choose they can wash it off. They can sit at society's supper table, eccentric guests perhaps, but welcome. We must all be ready to welcome the return of the prodigal son."

The child, known only as S, was born into the Family, which his mother joined when she was travelling. Her own mother, who lives in Kenya, was determined that he should not be brought up by the movement in one of its six British communes, and has waged a three year campaign to raise him herself.

Lord Justice Ward has angered former members and cult experts by his decision to allow the boy to remain with his mother, on the understanding she puts his welfare before her devotion to the Family. His ruling followed in-depth witness accounts of the corrupt excess-

es of life in the movement by former members, alongside advice from social workers and psychiatrists who visited the commune where the child lived.

The Family, which has been fighting to improve its image with the outside world for a decade, welcomed the decision last night. "We are delighted because we always knew this was never about one child," said Rachel Scott, a spokeswoman for the Family. "If the judge had found this not a decent living environment for a child, on the basis of past literature and allegations, that puts all our children at risk."

The boy's mother was also instructed to ensure he is properly educated; that she forbids anyone to inflict corporal punishment on him or subject him to periods of isolation; and allows him regular contact with relatives, including his grandmother.

Leaders of the movement had already rewritten guidelines for members to denounce past behaviour following the death of Mr Berg last year. They were circulated among the movement's 300 British members in February, and a copy of the charter was given to the judge to demonstrate how the

Family had changed. A newsletter circulated to members from leaders including Mr Berg's widow, Maria, also included a "prophecy" from him, denouncing their former excesses from the grave.

It said: "Dad is obviously sorry for any harm that was caused to anyone. Some young people got hurt by inappropriate sexual behaviour on the part of adults, and in 1986 he and I moved to ban all such acts."

But cult experts and former members of the Family expressed concern at the outcome. "I just can't see there is any way that you can watch over

people 24 hours a day," said Audrey Chaytor, chairman of FAIR, a cult-monitoring organisation. "I am pleased to hear the judge say that the wrongs of the past have been stamped out, but I will wait to see evidence that is the case."

"Everyone has to be given the chance to put their past aside, and it is wrong to blacken someone's name permanently, but I have never heard anyone from the Family condemning the past," she said.

The Cult Information Centre expressed anger. "You can't just change your name and expect everyone to believe every-

thing is suddenly okay," said Ian Haworth, general secretary. "I am as concerned about the welfare of that child as I ever was, and it will take some time for people like me to be convinced by this change."

Kristina Jones, 19, who left the movement seven years ago, was dismayed, having acted as a witness in the case. "I'm furious because I am convinced they haven't changed in their hearts," she said.

"Why should we believe they are suddenly telling the truth, when they have hidden what they are doing from the world for so long?"

## 'Original hippie' preached the law of love

David Berg, the maverick founder of the Children of God, dubbed the "original hippie", first took his anti-establishment from of Christianity to California in the Sixties, writes Rebecca Fowler.

It was here that the son of preachers began to build his worldwide empire, creating the movement's first communes.

Mr Berg built up his communal movement among followers who called him David Moses or Dad, and obeyed every order he gave. His endless writings, known as the *Mo Letters*, became the basis of their regime, and they would read them tirelessly.

They included gaudy pamphlets and the notorious "Law of Love" that encouraged members to share husbands and wives, invited women to prostitute themselves for new members, and condoned sex among children.

Among the most infamous images is a picture of a naked woman sitting astride a man, with the caption: "Receiving God is like sexually going all the way."

The basic tenet of his law was that, with the exception of sodomy, there was nothing wrong with sex, "whatever it's with, no matter what age or what relative or what manner", so long as it was done in love and not lust.

The movement spread across 50 countries from Europe to America, India and Australasia. As investigations into the practices of the Family gathered apace from London to Argentina, focusing on the treatment of the sect's children, Mr Berg went into hiding.

He still ruled over his flock of 9,000 members, including 3,000 children, with complete authority.

When he died last year, aged 75, the Family wrote glowing eulogies to his memory, and the *Mo Letters* still form the basis of their faith.

But Mr Berg's teachings were already being curbed by his flock in the 1980s.

As the movement fell into



Father figure: David Berg, who was called 'David Moses', or 'Dad', by followers

deeper disrepute, it dropped prostitution in 1987 and banned encouraging sex with or among children.

Mr Berg, who went into hiding in 1971, left the movement in the hands of his widow Maria, also in hiding. She delivered a prophecy from him last year apologising for any actions that might have hurt members

of the cult, especially children. This weekend, members of the Family said publicly for the first time that they denounced the most salacious teachings from Mr Berg.

However, they have retained the spirit of his letters on open sexual relationships.

"He himself was wrong to have written in that way, and we

do renounce his teachings," said Gideon Scott, a spokesman for the Family.

"We have rules that say you cannot have any sexual contact with anybody outside. But we believe that loving relationships are covered by God's injunction to do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

## Family behind closed doors

The communes that house the Children of God, now known as the Family, are invisible to outsiders. But within the walls of the discreet properties that spread from Kent to Scotland, a movement that had one of the worst reputations of any religious cult lives out its day to day life, writes Rebecca Fowler.

Every detail of its regime has been laid out in endless writings by the movement's American founder, David Berg, dubbed Moses David. The Family now has 9,000 members in 50 countries who follow his writings, known as the *Mo Letters*.

The cult first fell into disrepute in the 1970s when his pamphlets promoting the "Law of Love" were exposed as pornographic tracts. But in contrast to the sexual liberalism there was also strict discipline, spartan living conditions and regular beatings for children, according to former members.

Among those who recalls the harshness of the regime is Kristina Jones, 19, who escaped from the movement when she was 12, and was awarded £5,000 compensation for being sexually abused by members from the age of three.



Sea change: A new sect member being baptised into the Children of God at Brighton in the 1970s

"We were constantly moved round the communes so we didn't form close bonds with anyone, and we couldn't question anything," Miss Jones said.

"I was abused emotionally and physically, often hit on the head with belts and knuckles for doing nothing at all, and sex was rife. We had no idea of what the world outside was like."

So what has changed to convince Lord Justice Ward, who ruled yesterday that a mother could raise her grandson within the cult against the wishes of his grandmother, that the Family is a safe and happy environment in which to raise a child.

The movement was already concerned about the state of its image by the late 1980s. The

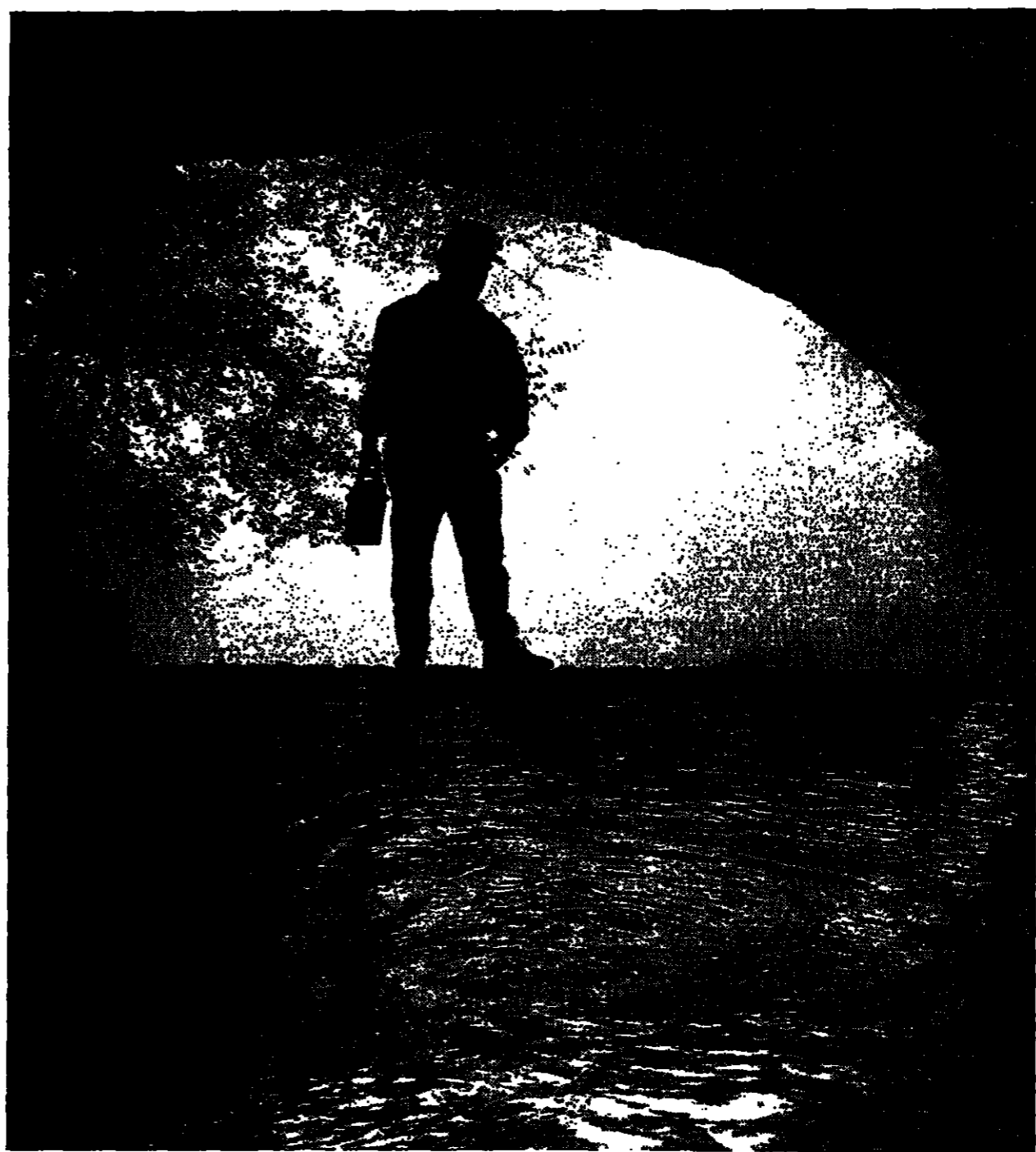
practice of "flirty fishing", or getting new members to pay women members for sex, was dropped, and in 1985 the cult says that it ruled anyone involved in sex with children would be thrown out.

In 1991 the concern was revealed when internal documents were leaked that instructed members to destroy any "explicit" videos or pictures in their possession.

The Family opened its doors to childcare experts this year who visited the commune where the boy lives, showed them the dormitories where the children slept, the classes where they were taught, and the new guidelines, aimed at rewriting the wrongs of the past.

"A lot of people believe the *Mo Letters* are rife with sex, but that's only a small portion of them," said Rachel Scott, a spokeswoman for the Family.

"We're only renouncing those parts that led people to believe interaction with minors was okay. That was wrong and should never have been written, but we are delighted the judge has recognised that we offer our children happy and safe homes."



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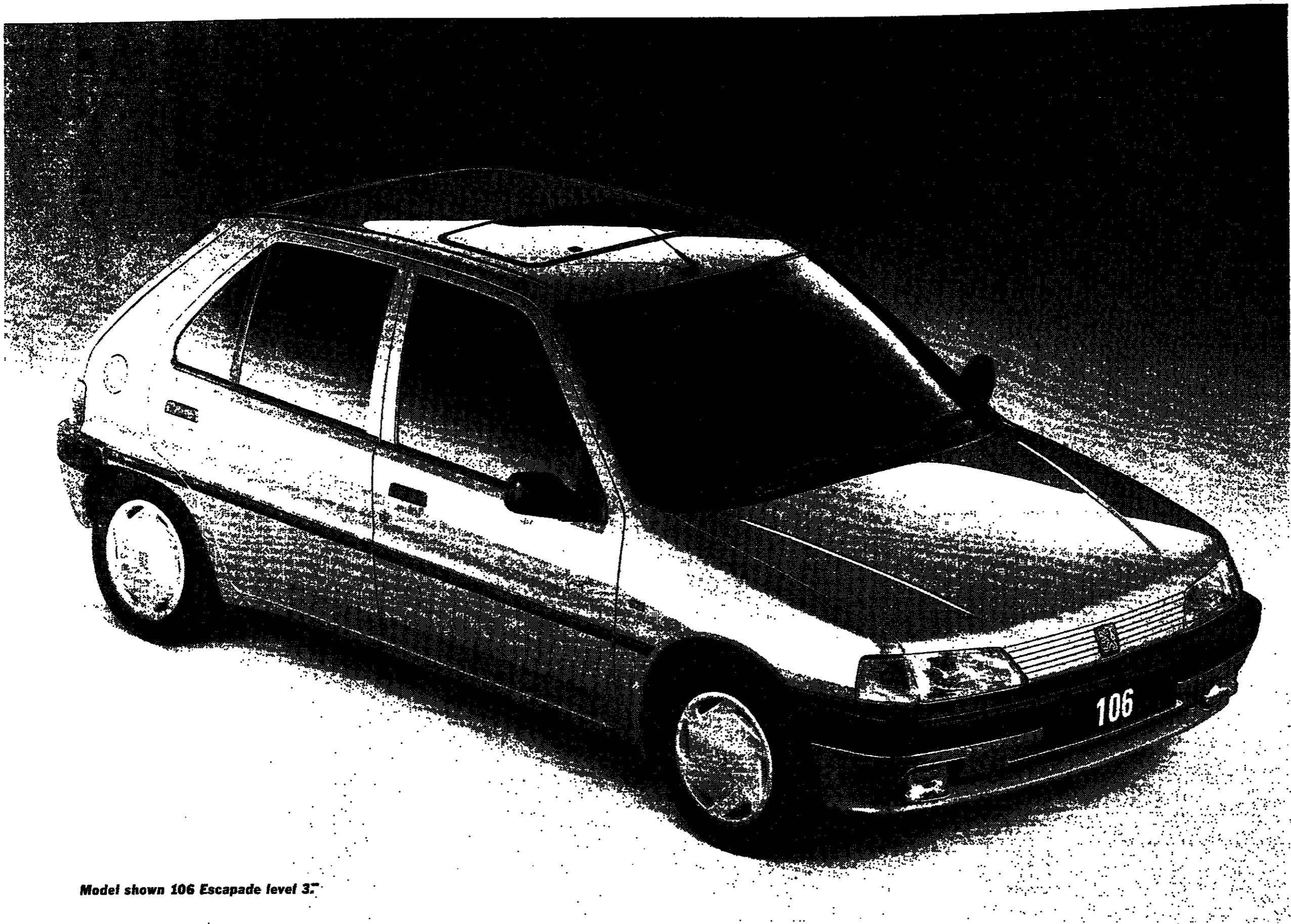
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# Skyscrapers listed as towering achievement

NICHOLAS SCHOON

A works' canteen in Dagenham, a Woolworth's branch in Canterbury, and the Centre Point skyscraper in London were among 21 modern buildings given listed status yesterday.

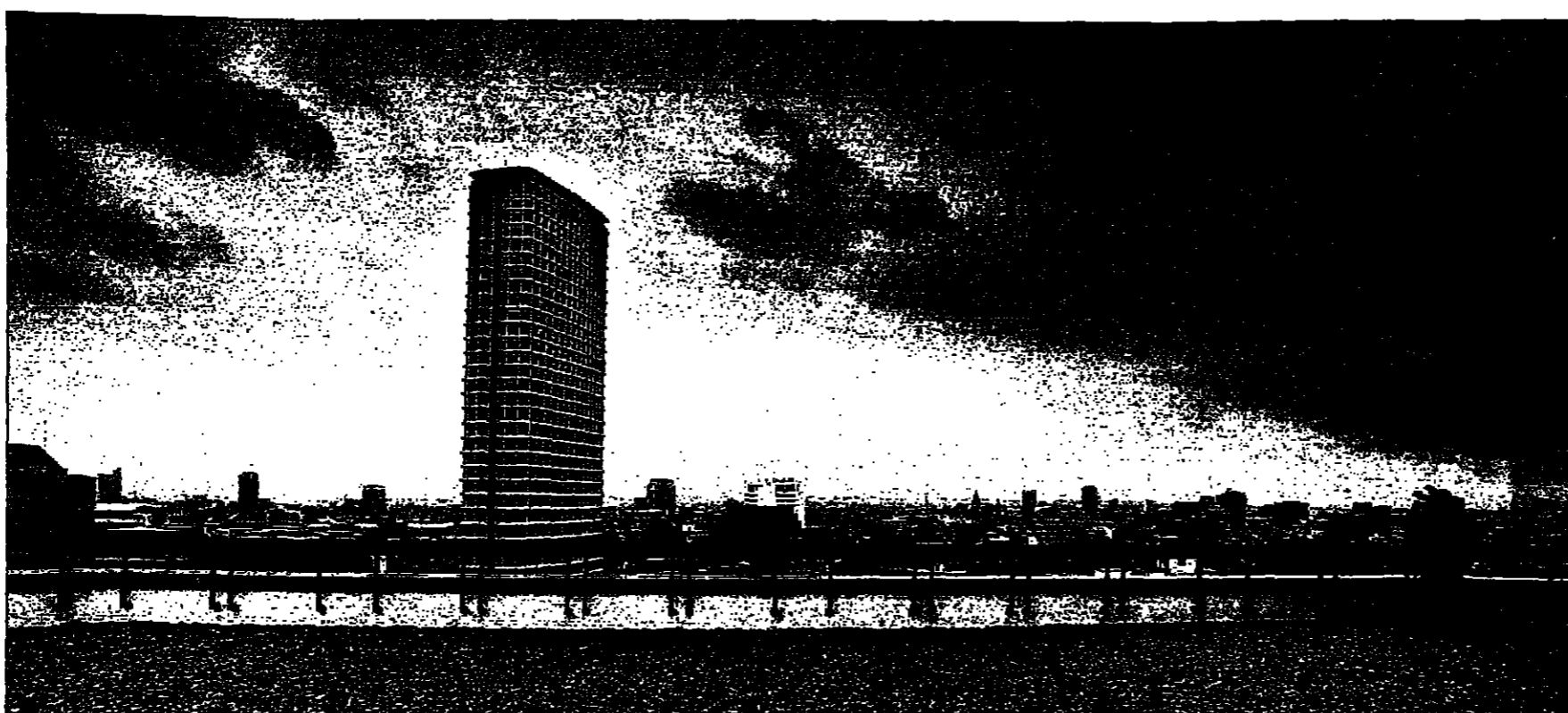
Virginia Bottomley, Secretary of State for National Heritage, admitted she didn't "particularly care for" some of the buildings she listed, including several 1960s railway stations and a signal box in Birmingham. But she liked Centre Point, which she described as exciting and innovative. Listed status gives the buildings, nearly all from the 1950s and 60s, strong protection against demolition.

Mrs Bottomley chose the buildings, all of them commercial or industrial, from a final list of 35 contenders put forward by English Heritage, the Government's conservation watchdog.

They are a tiny fraction of the thousands of factories, warehouses and office blocks built in the post-war boom years, when steady economic growth, rampant property speculation and the opportunity provided by hundreds of bomb-sites combined to transform Britain's cityscapes. The chosen few are meant to have the greatest architectural and historical interest and merit.

For the first time, members of the public were asked to comment on English Heritage's choice of buildings before Mrs Bottomley made up her mind. More than 2,000 letters were sent in.

Much disliked by the public, according to English Heritage, was Eros House in Catford,



Highly rated: Centre Point, at the junction of Oxford Street and Charing Cross Road (Photograph: Edward Sykes) and the CIS Building in Manchester, which were given listed status yesterday (Photograph: News Team)



south London, designed by Owen Luder, the current president of the Royal Institute of British Architects. This large early 1960s office block was put forward for listing, but not chosen by Mrs Bottomley.

"Ultimately, it's all very subjective," said Mr Luder yesterday. "If you go by majority vote, some of the best buildings in the world would never have been built. We should only pre-

serve a few of the very finest because cities are organic and ever-changing - they should not become fossilised."

Some of the buildings which did not make the final list are likely to be demolished. The property company that owns Marathon House, an office building in Aldermanbury Street, central London, has already made a planning application which envisages knocking down

the 1963 building "of considerable delicacy," according to English Heritage.

But the strange, 120ft tall lead shot tower in Bristol has been spared. It was built to make lead shotgun pellets - drops of molten lead fell down it, solidifying on the way - but is now redundant. Owners Shell UK had sought planning permission to demolish it, but will have to think again.

Some owners were dismayed at having their buildings listed. Heinz said it was "deeply disappointed" at the choice of its headquarters at Hillingdon, west of London, because of the constraints it placed on its "commercial freedom to develop the site."

The number of post-war listed buildings in Britain now stands at 154 - out of a total of 443,000 listed properties.

## Architectural additions to the broad mix of modern classics

Seven of the 21 listed buildings are in central London: 100 Pall Mall; New Zealand House in the Haymarket; Millbank Tower; the former offices of architects Yorke, Rosenberg and Mardall in the City; 41 Albermarle Street; Sakers; Sloane Square; and Centre Point.

The others are the CIS Building in Peter Street, Manchester; Carr and Co in Shirley, Birmingham; the Head Offices of Pilkington Glassworks in St Helens; the Bird's Eye offices in Walton-on-Thames, Surrey; the Heinz Headquarters Building in Hillingdon; the Woolworth store in St George's Street, Canterbury; the Rhone-Poulenc canteen in Dagenham; the John Lewis warehouse in Stevenage; the Lead Shot tower in Cheese Lane, Bristol; Birmingham New Street signal box; and four railway stations - Manchester Road, Harlow Town, Coventry, and the booking hall at Barking.

## 'Time bandit' angers Scots by daylight plan

COLIN BROWN and JOHN ARLIDGE

The Scots were yesterday waking up with anger to the plans of a southern Tory MP to put them on a different time-scale from the rest of Britain.

Sir Hector Monro, a former Scottish Office minister, warned that John Butterfill's private member's bill, which seeks to move Britain on to Central European Time ending the practice of putting the clocks back in winter, would threaten the Union.

"The 72 Scots MPs will vehemently oppose it. It will create tensions," Sir Hector Monro, Conservative MP for Dumfries, said.

Sir Hector rejected as "ludicrous" a compromise offered by Mr Butterfill to allow Scotland to continue putting the clocks back, creating two time zones in the United Kingdom. He said people living in the borders would not be able to cope with two separate times - one for



Monro: Warns against plan

Dumfries and another for Carlisle.

Scottish ministers are also lining up against the Bill, which would provide an extra hour of daylight in the evening but make winter mornings darker.

Michael Forsyth, the Secretary of State for Scotland, who will announce on Thursday - St Andrew's Day - government plans for devolving more powers to Scottish MPs, said he strongly opposed Mr Butterfill's ideas.

In Scotland where, if Mr Butterfill's proposals were approved, most areas would remain dark until 10am, nationalist politicians ridiculed the Tory backbencher as "a time bandit threatening Scotland with daylight robbery".

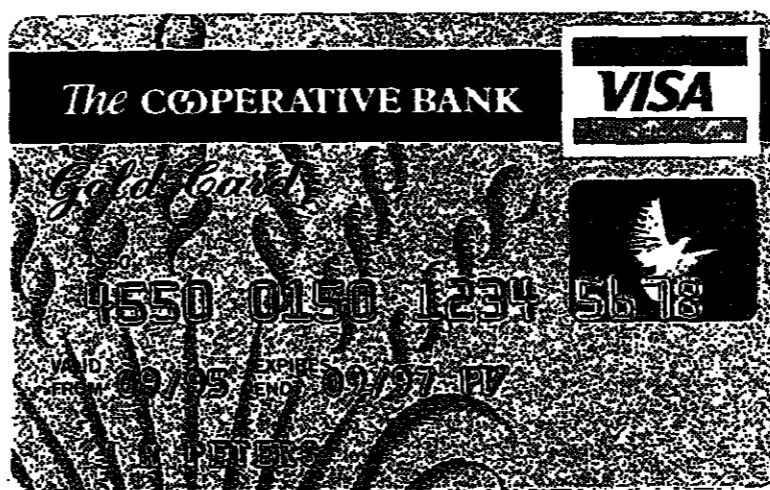
But Mr Butterfill, MP for Bournemouth West, strongly defended the Bill. "It's not a bill proposed by an English MP. It's backed by 130 organisations, including the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, the Police Federation, the Sports Council, Age Concern, the British Tourist Authority and the CBI."

He said it could save an estimated 140 lives in accidents each year, and £250m a year in energy. "Both of those would be particularly important in Scotland because there are proportionately more accidents in the early afternoon and evening... and they have much harsher weather." He said they would also benefit from an extra £1,000m a year in tourism.

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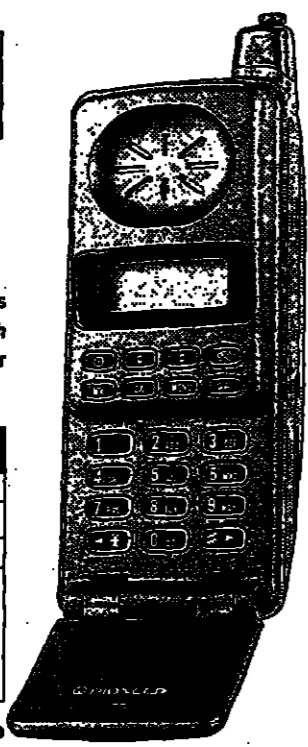
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## news

**Irish divorce referendum:** Campaign against liberalisation prevailing despite town's curious 300-year-old Protestant enclave

# Catholic whisper enough to drown Calvin's legacy

ALAN MURDOCH  
Portlington, County Laois

The electoral register in yesterday's divorce referendum was not alone in showing Portlington has a past different to other provincial towns.

Gravestones and Great War plaques feature family names such as Blanc, Champ, LaCombre and Tabuteau, highlighting the legacy of an earlier conflict. French Huguenots and their descendants, refugees from persecution at home who fled to Holland and joined the army of William of Orange, settled here in the 1690s.

Their leader, the Marquis de Revignie, "went native" as "The Earl of Galway". Thus was born a curious enclave of French Calvinism in the heart of Catholic Ireland.

Inside "the French" church of St Paul's in the town, built first by Huguenots in 1696, Church of Ireland minister, the Reverend Scott Peoples, pauses before commenting on 5 per

cent Protestant population in the vicinity.

He is wary of Irish party leaders' warnings this week that a "majoritarian" imposition of Catholic views on divorce on religious minorities in the Republic will send dangerous signals to Northern Ireland Unionists, at a time when Dublin is seeking the political accommodation of a Catholic nationalist minority there.

"I'm not so concerned by that, because the community we're in has to express the beliefs it holds ..."

Like many he recognises that arguments, while intense, have been more controlled than during the 1986 referendum. Religious affiliation locally, he suggests, is now less significant than social distinctions.

In the neat town centre with its 18th century stone houses, the referendum seems muted. What little propaganda is visible is all against divorce. In the main street is a solitary "scare" poster, warning "You Will Pay!"

10 per cent higher tax if the divorce ban is lifted. The opponents of divorce are speaking rather than shouting.

In her stationery shop Vera McLaughlin explains. "People here are very set in their ways. There are a lot of No voters around. What it is people are afraid of an 'explosion'. But if it is not passed it will be another 20 or 30 years before it can be raised again."

"In a whispered voice, she adds ruefully, "we will seem awful backward if it is lost."

Ronnie and Jack Matthews, who run a busy cafe in the town, have Huguenot connections which include three Blancs married into the family. Despite expectations of a "No" victory, Ronnie suggests that polls being open until 10pm on a Friday could be significant in allowing Ireland's weekend migration of tens of thousands of students to be in home towns in time to cast their mainly liberal votes. "That was a clever stroke by someone," he says.



Minority view: The Rev Scott Peoples in the churchyard of St Paul's, Portlington, founded by Huguenot settlers

Photograph: Tony Gavin

## Wife hurled knives at MP over 'gay affair'

David Ashby MP once had to lock himself and an elderly male friend in their rooms when his estranged wife began throwing knives and plates after accusing them of having an affair, the High Court heard yesterday.

Mr Ashby, 55, the MP for North West Leicestershire, who is suing for libel over an allegation in the *Sunday Times* that he is a homosexual, had taken retired civil servant Edward O'Byrne up to his constituency home, Ravenstone House, in June this year, his counsel Geoffrey Shaw QC told the court.

Silvana Ashby, 52, who was convinced her husband was having an affair with a doctor, Ciaran Kilduff, then arrived.

"She was very angry and probably expected to find Dr Kilduff there," Mr Shaw said. "Kitchen knives and plates were thrown at Mr Ashby. Then he got Mr O'Byrne in his room and locked him in and eventually Mr Ashby got to his room and locked himself in, leaving his wife downstairs shouting for some hours."

Mrs Ashby, who split from her husband at the end of 1993, was accompanied in court by their daughter Alexandra, 27.

Mr Ashby is claiming damages over the *Sunday Times* article in January 1994 which said he had shared a bed with a male friend on a holiday in Goa the previous November.

He says it alleged he was a practising homosexual who had misled Silvana about the nature of his sexuality: that he had lied

to the public about having an affair with Dr Kilduff during a trip to France early in 1994; and that he was a hypocrite in emphasising the importance of the family in his last election address.

Times Newspapers Ltd and former *Sunday Times* editor Andrew Neil deny libel, although they accept Mr Ashby did not holiday with a man in Goa, India. They claim that Mr Ashby was and is having an affair with Dr Kilduff.

Mr Shaw said a private detective had been watching Mr Ashby on behalf of the *Sunday Times*. He said the newspaper had amended its defence last month to include the allegation that Mr Ashby spent the night of last Bank Holiday Monday, 28 August, with Dr Kilduff in the doctor's flat in Putney, south-west London, for reasons of "mutual homosexual affection".

It had a video showing Mr Ashby arriving at 5.45pm on 28 August and leaving at 8.30am the next morning.

However, Mr Shaw said that Mr Ashby had in fact gone to the flat between 5pm and 6pm to put some plants in the garden before collecting Dr Kilduff from Heathrow at 9.25pm and dropping him off at the flat between 11pm and midnight.

He had gone into the flat for 30 minutes but had spent the night at his flat in Wimbledon before returning early next morning to potter in the garden and have a cup of coffee with Dr Kilduff before leaving at 8.30am.

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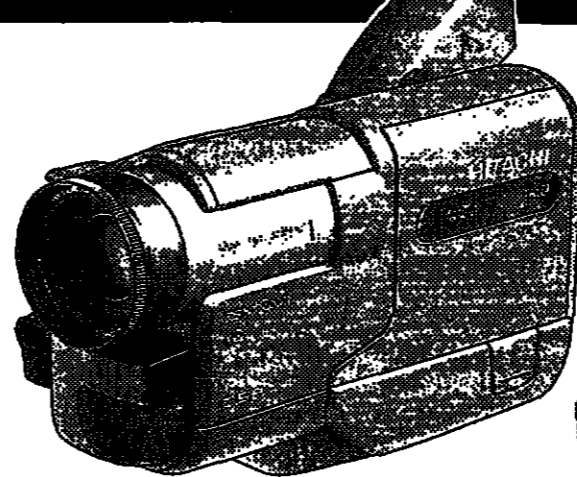
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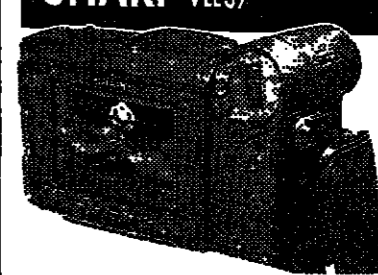
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**Budget countdown:** Threatened by closures, the whisky producers of the Highlands and islands call for easing of tax burden

## Scotch lobby in plea to protect distilleries

COLIN BROWN  
Chief Political Correspondent

John Major's commitment to listen to Scottish opinion is being challenged ahead of the Budget by the Scotch Whisky Association, which is lobbying hard to protect the distilleries from further closure.

A total of four distilleries producing malt whisky closed in the past year - Bruichladdich on Islay, Fullbairdine in Perthshire, Tannavulin in Speyside, and Glen Carloch in Aberdeen.

But it is not only the loss of the amber nectar that the Scots mourn. It is the loss of communities that the distilleries support.

There may be only a handful of jobs in each distillery but the position of the distillery in the community is very important. Quite often, they keep the local school going, the district nurse, the hotel and the shop. The whisky lorries going to and fro keep the ferries open to the islands," said Campbell

Evans, a spokesman for the Scotch Whisky Association.

The four distilleries which closed brought the total number of working distilleries down to 87 in Scotland.

The SWA lobbies the Treasury every year for a freeze in duty on whisky, but in recent days, its leaders have met Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, to demand a cut of 8 per cent which would take 50p off a bottle of whisky, with 4 per cent cut ever year for the next 14 years.

The Treasury's revenue from whisky fell by £80m when the duty was increased by 25p on a bottle in 1992. Mr Clarke avoided any increase in his Budget last year, but reversed the decision, and increased it by 26p a bottle in his mini-budget after the defeat over VAT on fuel. The SWA say that revenue has fallen by £54m as a result.

"More duty means less for the Treasury," said the SWA spokesman. The association's aim is to reduce the tax on

Scotch to the level of beer or wine. They complain that the duty on a glass of whisky is 29p, compared to only 17p for a glass of wine or 15p for a half pint of beer.

They have hired a top-flight Westminster lobby organisation, the Communications Group, and have been behind two delegations to see Mr Clarke at the Treasury to press their case.

The campaign is being handled by Jonathan Caine, who was until a month ago the special adviser to Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Dame Jill Knight, the veteran Tory backbencher, led a delegation of Conservative MPs to the Chancellor a week ago. Mr Clarke met a group of senior SWA executives, including Hugh Morison, the director general, and John McGrath, chief executive, to hear their demands.

Mr Clarke, a beer drinker, refused to give anything away.



Ring of bright water: A sample of whiskies from the Glengoyne distillery, in the Central region of Scotland

Photograph: Wattie Cheung

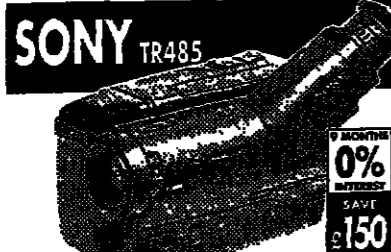
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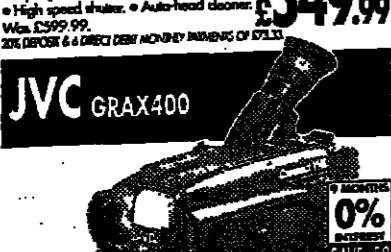
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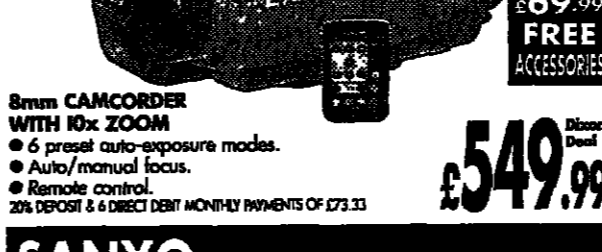
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## Hard times for men who make the hard stuff

JOHN ARLIDGE  
Scotland Correspondent

At the Glengoyne distillery, near the Trossachs, little has changed since whisky distilling began there in 1833.

The burn, which provides the pure unpeated water for producing whiskies, still runs down a waterfall outside the granite stillhouse. Inside, the latest generation of men and stillmen shuffle from washback to still checking the quality of the distillate, which will mature for up to 10 years in oak casks before being bottled.

But behind this quiet tradition, workers at Glengoyne, like many in Scotland's 87 distilleries, are worried. Kenneth Clarke's decision to levy an extra 26p duty on a bottle of whisky in his mini-Budget last December has led to a sharp decline in whisky sales.

Figures based on returns from Customs and Excise reveal that clearances from bond, the warehouses where the spirit must mature for at least three years to meet the legal requirement to become Scotch, have fallen by around 20 per cent since January.

Distillers insist that with whisky taxed at £7 a bottle, compared with just over £1 for

wine, Britain is pricing one of its finest products out of the domestic market. And sales on the Continent, which have been rising in recent years, are beginning to level off as foreign governments, taking their cue from the Chancellor, begin to tax whisky more heavily.

Jim Turle has worked at Glengoyne for 20 years. He describes the dramatic changes in the industry. "In the Seventies distilleries were selling around 13 million cases of Scotch in the UK and around 22 million in the US. Now the figures are around 10 million cases in each market. The figures speak for themselves. One of Britain's best products is at risk and unfair taxation is largely to blame."

Mr Turle argues that if whisky was cheaper, sales would rise and the Government's tax take would grow. Mr Clarke, he says, should cut 50p off the price of a bottle of Scotch. He acknowledges criticism distillers have been slow to market Scotch to a "lost generation" of drinkers under 30 who now prefer vodka and white rum. But he points to a series of groundbreaking television adverts as evidence the industry is putting its stillhouse in order. "We are doing our bit. It is time for the Government to do its."



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## news

# Citroens head table of most dangerous cars

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR  
Transport Correspondent

Citroen 2CVs and Dyanes, older Toyota Carinas and Vauxhall Carlton should be avoided by safety conscious drivers who want to survive crashes, according to an analysis of accident statistics.

The Department of Transport yesterday published research on which cars fare best in crashes and they show sharp divergences even between similarly-sized cars.

The statistics are divided into four groups depending on the size of the car and not surprisingly bigger cars tend to be considerably safer than smaller ones.

From analysing forms filled in by police following over 170,000 collisions between cars, models have been classified according to the rate of personal injury. Adjustments have been made to take account of the type of accident, such as whether it was side-on, and the type of driver, such as their age and sex.

As with last year's analysis, when the statistics were compiled for the first time, the little ratty Citroens which look as

if they would crumple on impact live up to their image. They are by far the most dangerous cars to drive, with a protection value rating of around 35 per cent below the average for all cars. By contrast, the slick well-advertised Renault Clio heads the small car table, with a safety performance just below the average for all cars.

The "lower medium" cars are dominated by VWs with the Golf/Vento, the Golf/Jetta and the Golf Mk1/Cabrio taking three of the top four places, with the Volvo 300 topping the group. Nissan Cherry has the worst record with protection value 15 per cent the average for all cars.

For upper medium cars, the Toyota Carina models built between early 1985 and early 1988 figure particularly badly with a protection value 10 per cent below the average for all cars but more recent Carinas are in the average for the group. Among the safer cars, the VW Passat, the Mercedes 190 and the Mazda 626 head the group.

While larger cars all have protection values above the average for all cars, Vauxhalls perform particularly badly with both Senators and Carlton in

the bottom five. Volvos, predictably perhaps, are the top three.

The statistics do not include 1995 models because there have not been sufficient accidents to produce accurate data.

The booklet only deals with the prospects of avoiding injury or death once a crash has occurred, rather than the chances of being involved in one.

The DoT therefore admits that the booklet gives only a partial picture of car safety by not including these accident rates but say that the booklet is still useful in allowing people to make comparisons between models. And, of course, while larger cars are safer for occupants, they are more dangerous for pedestrians, whose safety is not taken into account by the statistics. However, the booklet does advise owners not to fit bull bars, which have been shown to increase risk to pedestrians struck by cars.

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders was dismissive of the analysis: "We feel people should not take this information too seriously when assessing their next car purchase." □ *Choosing Safety* is published by HMSO, £2.99.



Back in action: An 160-year-old steam engine bursts into life, for the first time in 125 years, under the watchful eye of Peter Fagg, chief engineer of the British Engineering Museum. The engine has been restored after being discovered in Vienna. Photograph: Andrew Hasson

## 'Onco-mouse' spreads confusion in patent office

TOM WILKIE  
Science Editor

The public hearing to decide whether it is possible to patent a genetically engineered mouse broke up in confusion yesterday, with no decision being reached.

However, officials of the European Patent Office (EPO) in Munich have told Harvard University to redraft the terms of its patent concerning a mouse which had been genetically engineered to develop cancer.

The hearing, which began on Tuesday and ran late into the evening, ended abruptly yesterday morning, with the four EPO officials gathering their papers and leaving the room.

They refused to hear protests from the British barrister, Daniel Alexander, at the hearing's premature termination. However, they did say that opposition could be made in writing rather than orally to a tribunal.

Peter Stevenson, from Compassion in World Farming (CIWF), which has co-ordinated opposition to the patent in the United Kingdom, said: "I think we made great headway although I would not like to guess at the final outcome."

The original patent covered not just mice but any non-human mammal with an inserted oncogene (cancer-causing gene). It now appears likely that the patent, if allowed at all, will

be restricted so as to exclude possible onco-rabbits, onco-dogs, or onco-monkeys.

The opposition, from religious groups and animal welfare organisations, centred on moral and legal objections to the idea that a living animal could be classified as an "invention" and thus patented, rather than as a "product of nature", and unpatentable.

CIWF and the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection also claimed it was immoral to patent an animal brought into existence specifically to develop a painful lethal disease. Article 53a of the European Patent Convention prohibits patents whose exploitation would be contrary to morality.

## Second 'boot camp' to get the go-ahead

JOHN RENTOUL

A second American-style "boot camp" for young offenders has been given the go-ahead by ministers. According to government sources, the Home Office will shortly announce a camp to be set up next year at Colchester military corrective centre in Essex.

The centre, for 30 offenders aged 18 to 21, is part of a pilot scheme announced by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, in September.

Mr Howard then announced that the first boot camp, the 60-place Thorn Cross near Warrington, Cheshire, would open next summer.

Despite the Prime Minister's promise to "shock young

offenders out of drifting into crime", the Government's experience of various kinds of "short, sharp, shock" regimes for young offenders has been unsuccessful since 1979. Home Office sources are cautious about the latest American-inspired scheme. They stress it is a small-scale experiment, and say its "graduates" will be monitored closely.

Colchester, which will be run by the Army as an attachment to the existing centre for court-martialled soldiers, will have a more physical regime than at Thorn Cross. The regime is designed to keep inmates fully occupied from 6.30am to 10pm and will have less behavioural therapy, such as anger management training, than Thorn Cross.

### How safe is your car?

Vehicles not listed below have an average safety record. Cars are listed in alphabetical order in each group.

#### Small Cars

Above average  
Renault Clio Mar '91-Dec '94  
Peugeot 205 Jan '85-Dec '94  
Below average  
Rover Mini Jan '85-Dec '94  
Nissan Micra Jan '85-Dec '92  
Fiat Panda Jan '85-Dec '94  
Citroen AX Jan '87-Dec '94  
Citroen 2CV/Dyane Jan '85-Aug '90

#### Lower Medium Cars

Above average  
Volvo 300 Jan '85-Dec '91  
VW Golf/Vento Feb '92-Dec '94  
VW Golf/Jetta Jan '85-Jan '92  
VW Mk1/Cabrio Jan '85-Dec '93  
Vauxhall Astra Oct '91-Dec '94

Rover 200/400 Oct '89-Dec '94  
Peugeot 306 Apr '93-Dec '94  
Ford Escort/Orion Sep '90-Dec '94  
Fiat Tempra/Tempra Jul '88-Dec '94  
Citroen ZX Jan '91-Dec '94  
Below average  
Skoda Estelle Jan '85-Jul '90  
Rover 200 Jan '85-Jul '89  
Peugeot 309 Feb '86-Mar '93  
Nissan Sunny Jan '85-Aug '86  
Nissan Cherry Jan '85-Aug '86  
Ford Escort/Orion Jan '85-Aug '90

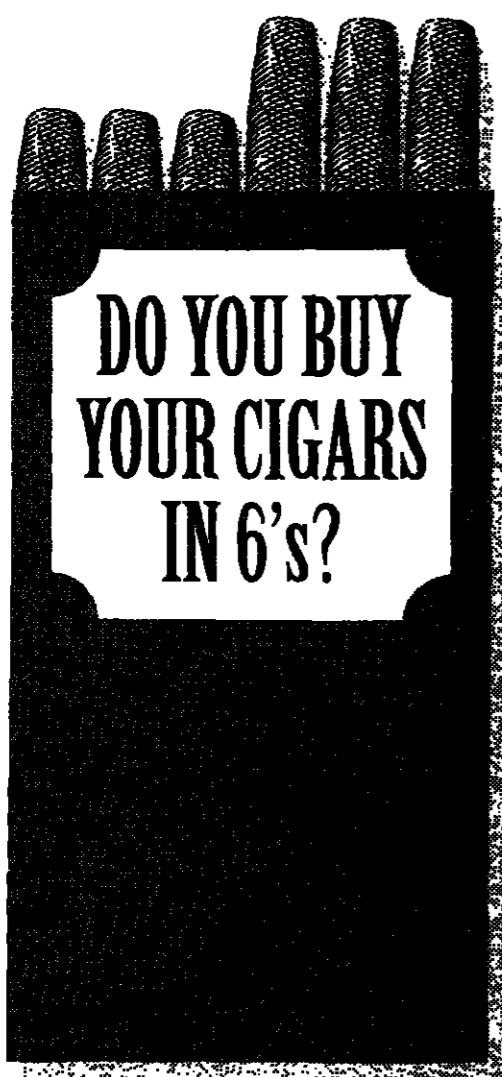
#### Upper Medium Cars

Above average  
VW Passat Jun '88-Dec '94  
Mercedes 190 Jan '85-Sep '93  
Mazda 626 Jan '85-Sep '87  
Honda Accord Oct '91-Jul '94  
Ford Mondeo Mar '94-Dec '94  
Citroen BX Jan '85-Dec '93  
BMW 3 Series Apr '91-Dec '94  
BMW 3 Series Jan '85-Dec '91

Audi 80/90 Jan '85-Dec '94  
Below average  
Jaguar XJ6 Jan '85-Dec '94  
Rover Montego Jan '85-Dec '94  
Ford Sierra/Sable Jan '85-Dec '94

Executive/Luxury Cars  
Above average  
Volvo 900 Jan '85-Dec '94  
Volvo 700 Jan '85-Dec '94  
Volvo 200 Jan '85-Dec '94  
SAB 9000 Oct '85-Dec '94

Below average  
Jaguar XJ6 Jan '85-Dec '94  
BMW 7 Series Jan '85-Dec '94  
Nissan Skyline Jan '85-Dec '94  
Vauxhall Carlton Jan '85-Dec '94  
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# Straw bed for Leeson as he starts life in jail

STEVE BOGGAN

Nick Leeson, the rogue Barings trader, was given his first taste of Singaporean prison life last night after a judge remanded him in custody at a maximum security jail.

The man credited with bringing down Britain's oldest bank slept on a straw mattress in a spartan cell shared with two white-collar criminals in Tanah Merah prison.

Mr Leeson, 38, will stay at the prison until 1 December when a date for his trial is likely to be set. During his first court appearance yesterday, he wore his futures trading uniform and looked tired after the flight from Frankfurt and a night's interrogation by Singapore's Commercial Affairs Department, the equivalent of Britain's Serious Fraud Office.

It took 75 minutes for the 11 charges against him to be read in full from 19 sheets of paper, a process for which District Judge Tan Siong Thye apologised. "I know it's laborious," he said. "But we have no choice. We have to go through it."

Mr Leeson is charged with fraud and forgery in the disastrous dealings which brought the 232-year-old bank to its knees last February with £840m losses. Six of the charges allege that he cheated the Singapore International Money Exchange (SIMEX), three allege that he forged documents and two that he defrauded Barings Futures Singapore.

The charge sheets contained reams of figures to illustrate the allegations of forgeries and misrepresentations he is accused of making in order to conceal his enormous, unauthorised losses.

The forgery charges alleged that Mr Leeson altered bank and company documents to show that Barings Futures was owed 7.778 billion yen by a US company, Spear, Leeds and Kellogg.

This was done to deceive Bar-

ings auditors into believing that Barings Futures had enough money to fund the futures bets, when it fact it did not.

He allegedly hid losses in an account called Error Account 88888 and created credits in other accounts to give the impression that he could cover his losses.

Mr Leeson was betting on Japanese stocks rising but they plunged in the wake of last year's Kobe earthquake.

Instead of pulling out and cutting his losses, he continued on what has been described as a "double or quits" strategy. No-one has ever alleged that he stole money for himself.

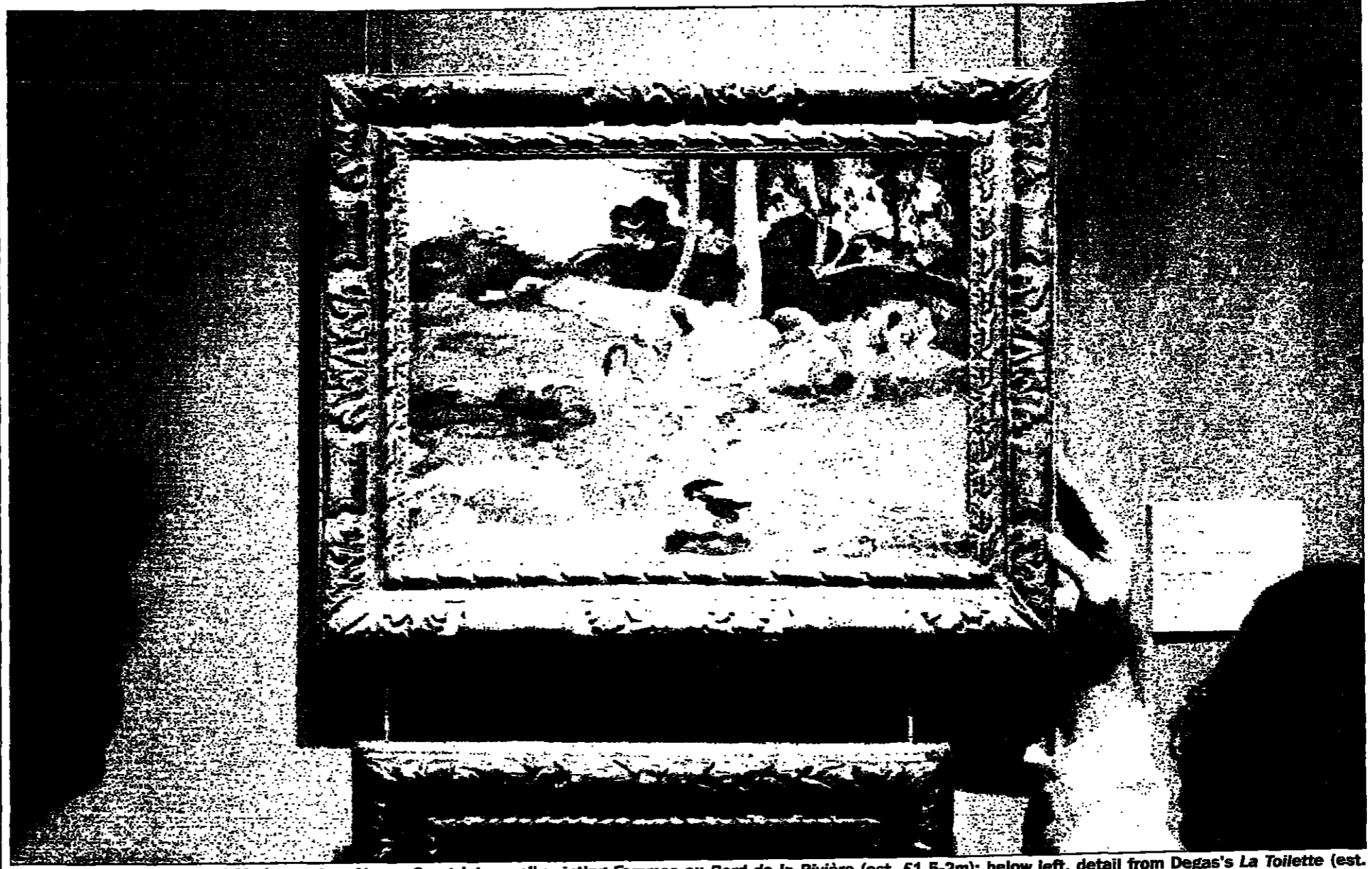
Throughout yesterday's hearing in court 26 of the Subordinate Courts building, which his wife, Lisa, did not attend, Mr Leeson listened soberly and made no comment. He was not asked to enter a plea.

His solicitor, John Koh, said the trial could begin as early as late December.

Until then, Mr Leeson will sleep on his straw mattress in a cell with no furniture. He will eat standard prison fare, which includes meals without pork for Muslims, and he will have daily visitation rights except at weekends.

Remand prisoners are also allowed visits by ordained ministers with the approval of the director of prisons, as well as meetings with lawyers. Foreigners may be visited by consular officers from their embassies or high commissions. If convicted, Mr Leeson faces a maximum sentence of 14 years.

However, there has been much speculation that he will receive a much shorter sentence in return for co-operating with the Singaporeans, whose own inquiry asked questions of the behaviour of James Bax, Mr Leeson's superior in the Singapore operation, and Peter Norris, his boss in Britain. Mr Leeson has said he will co-operate fully.



From the Impressionist and Modern sales: Above, Gauguin's small painting *Femmes au Bord de la Rivière* (est. £1.5-2m); below left, detail from Degas's *La Toilette* (est. £0.8-1m), both at Sotheby's. Below right, one of only two bronze versions of Brancusi's sculpture *Le Commencement du Monde* (est. £2m), at Christie's



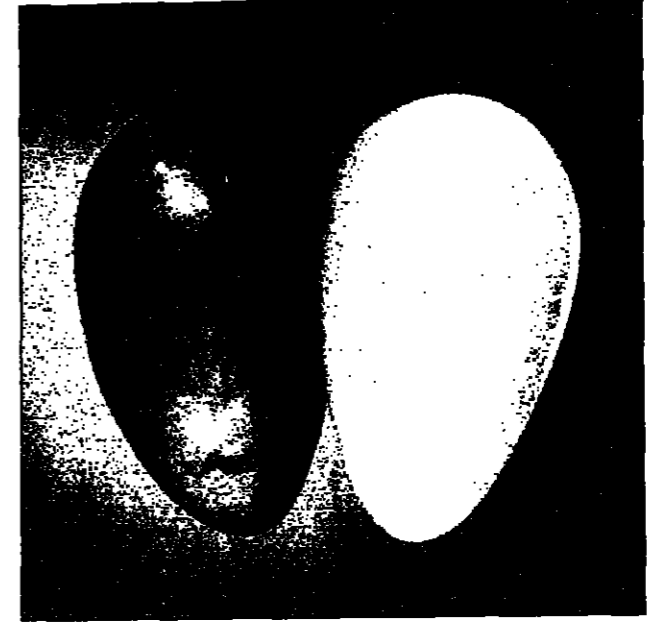
## Modern art sale offers Gauguin's Tahiti magic

JOHN MCKIE

The finest collection of Impressionist and Modern Art seen in Britain this year - including a sculpture never before seen by the public - is to be sold this week in two auctions in London. Sotheby's will offer some of the century's best works in a two-day sale, opening on Monday, with paintings by Gauguin, Monet and Pissarro. Among them is one of Paul Gauguin's first canvases of the South Seas, *Femmes au Bord de la Rivière*, which dates from his first visit to Tahiti in 1891-3. Last June, Gauguin's last landscape of Tahiti fetched £5.5m at Sotheby's

and this smaller work is expected to fetch £1.5-2m.

Claude Monet's *Matinée sur la Seine* (est. £1-1.25m), Degas's *La Toilette* (est. £0.8-£1m) and a selection of work from German expressionists, including Max Pechstein, Egon Schiele and Erich Heckel, are on offer as well. On Tuesday, Christie's offers work never before seen by the public, a version of Constantin Brancusi's *Le Commencement du Monde*. The bronze sculpture, kept in a private collection for 70 years, is expected to realise up to £2m. Christie's also has works by Bonnard, Picasso, Degas and Magritte.



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EURO TUNNEL

## news

# Fatal attack on unborn child 'can be murder case'

A man who stabbed his pregnant girlfriend, ultimately causing the death of their baby daughter, could have been tried for murder, the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor, ruled yesterday.

The Attorney General, Sir Nicholas Lyell, had asked judges in the Court of Appeal to rule in a test case that the man had committed either murder or manslaughter. However, Lord Taylor immediately allowed yesterday's ruling to go to the House of Lords because of its importance to the law.

He emphasised that his decision would not have any implications for doctors carrying out abortions.

Simon Hawkins QC had argued at the hearing that no offence could be committed against a child who, at the time of the attack which later caused its death, was as yet unborn and therefore not legally recognised as "a person in being".

He warned the appeal judges that to uphold the Attorney General's case would "open up a very difficult area" in relation to late abortions and the delivery of live foetuses which are then allowed to die.

But Lord Taylor, sitting in the Court of Appeal with Mr Justice Kay and Mrs Justice Steel, said in his judgment: "A doctor who carries out an abortion in accordance with the Abortion

Act 1967 is not acting unlawfully and hence, were such a doctor to be charged with murder, the charge would fail because the element that the act must be unlawful could not be made out."

The woman victim was stabbed during a drunken row and gave birth three months prematurely. Her baby, which bore a stab wound in her abdomen, died four months later. Two years ago, her boyfriend was acquitted of murdering the child on the directions of a judge at Leeds Crown Court.

The man, sentenced to four years in jail for wounding the woman, has not been named at the Court of Appeal and yesterday's ruling cannot affect his acquittal on the murder charge.

However, a new point of law has been formulated which will mean that anyone causing unlawful injury to a foetus or a pregnant woman which eventually causes the death of the child may face manslaughter or murder charges.

In their conclusions yesterday, the judges ruled: "Murder or manslaughter can be committed where unlawful injury is deliberately inflicted either to a child in utero or to a mother carrying a child in utero."

"The requisite intent to be proved in the case of murder is an intention to kill or cause really serious bodily injury to the mother, the foetus before birth being viewed as an integral part of the mother."

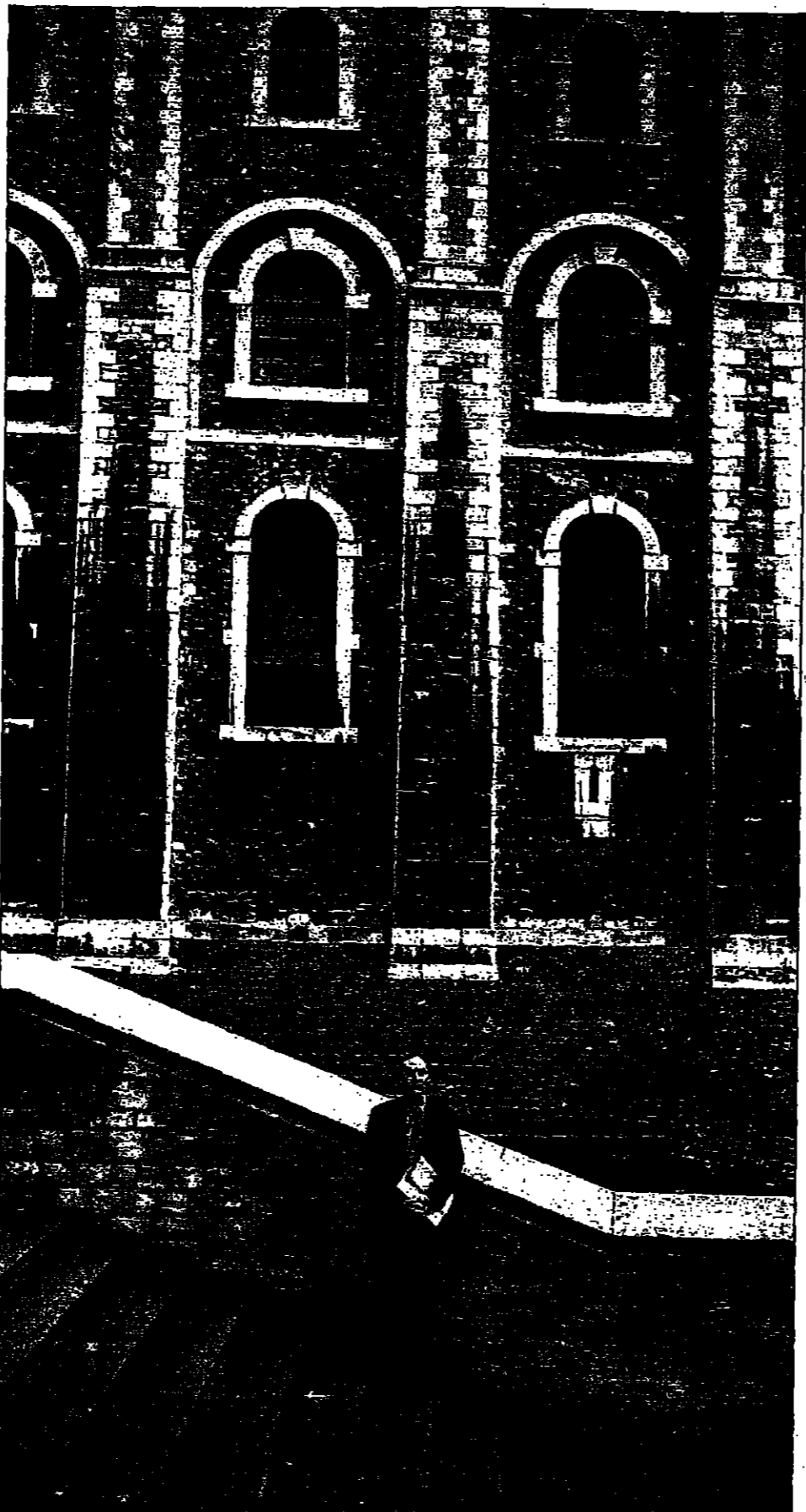
Lord Taylor allowed the case to be referred to the House of Lords after Andrew Lees, junior counsel for the man in the Leeds trial, said the judgment was "a matter of great public importance with far reaching consequences."

"It does widen protection to the unborn child, not only to charges of murder and manslaughter but to charges of unlawful violence. It should be decided by the House of Lords because it is a redirection of law."



Lord Taylor: Appeal ruling

Rebuilt attraction: Discovery of lower roof denies William the Conqueror architect's role



Time watch: Geoffrey Parnell in front of the White Tower



Historical clue: The visible outline of the Tower's original, pitched roof

## Tower's secret storey rewrites history

DAVID LISTER  
Arts Correspondent

Officials at the Tower of London have uncovered a 900-year-old secret which means that the history of Britain's most famous tourist attraction will have to be rewritten.

It has been discovered that the White Tower, the imposing centrepiece of the Tower, was originally only two thirds the size it is now.

It emerges that the roof of the famous building is not the original built by William the Conqueror, as has always been assumed. Instead, in what might be the first example of a royal offspring trying to emulate and outdo his father, his son William Rufus put on a higher roof.

Guy Wilson, Master of the Armouries at the Tower of London, described the discovery as a "sensational" find. "It changes the history of the White Tower, one of the most famous buildings in Britain," he said.

The discovery was made by Geoffrey Parnell, Keeper of Tower History and author of the official history of the building. He was clearing parts of the White Tower to redisplay it after moving objects up to the new Royal Armouries museum

in Leeds, when he found on a stone wall a visible scar of the original pitched roof.

A search through the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* showed there had been a hurricane in 1090, leaving the building "sore shaken by the wind".

The subsequent rebuilding of the Tower of London by William Rufus means that historians will now have to decide why he changed his father's plans, and what uses would have been made of the original, much smaller building. Mr Parnell said the significance for architectural historians was enormous.

He added: "There is a clear scar of a pitched roof which predates the flat one. It sets the cat among the pigeons in terms of the Tower's history. It now looks like the violent storm of 1090 was the sort of event which may have brought about a major remodelling of the building."

"Rufus was a builder monarch. He built the Great Hall at Westminster. He wasn't a man to do things by half. So he clearly decided to improve on his father's efforts. One has to accept that there's strong evidence of an earlier, lower roof, so we now have to find out

how the earlier rooms worked. The two main chambers on the first floor now begin to look more like conventional Norman halls."

Mr Wilson added: "No one had thought before that the building was at the wrong height."

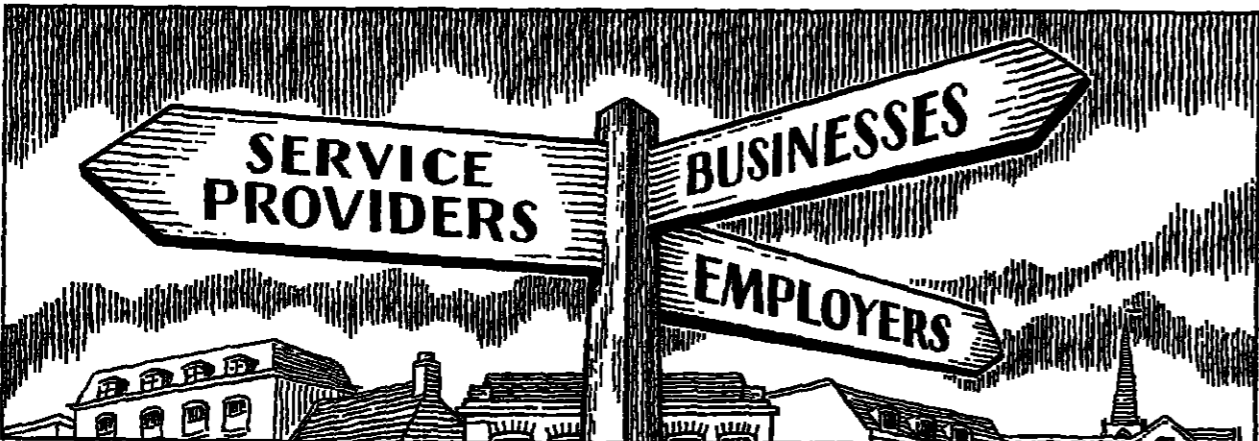
Mr Parnell's official book on the Tower says: "The White Tower is still one of the potent symbols of Norman authority. To the native Saxon population of London, unfamiliar with buildings of such scale and appearance, it must have provided a vivid reminder that a new order had been established."

Now, of course, the new discovery makes it clear that William the Conqueror's building was a third less imposing.

"It's an enigma," said Mr Parnell yesterday. "Why did Rufus do it? The original building would have looked different and worked differently. What went on inside it? We don't have the answers yet."

The re-examination of the White Tower, which attracted 2.3 million visitors last year, is leading to other discoveries. An exploration of disused chimney flues has found a bird's nest believed to be hundreds of years old.

Photographs: John Voos



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## international

# Mexico scandal: Geneva police launch money-laundering inquiry

## Salinas relative held in \$84m Swiss swoop

RAYMOND WHITAKER  
and agencies

The scandal enveloping Mexico's political establishment acquired fresh dimensions yesterday when the Swiss authorities announced that the sister-in-law of the former president, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, had been arrested in Geneva in a drugs and money-laundering investigation.

Paulina Castanon was arrested in the company of her brother, Antonio Castanon, as she used false documents in an attempt to withdraw \$84m (£53m) from a Swiss bank account, according to the Mexican attorney-general's office. She is the wife of Mr Salinas's brother, Raul, who has been in detention since February on charges that he masterminded the murder of the secretary-general of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI).

Mexican newspapers yesterday published photographs of a false driving licence bearing Raul Salinas's photograph but in the name of Juan Guillermo Gomez, an alias the authorities say he has used before to buy one of the 21 properties they claim he accumulated during his

brother's years in power. His wife presented the licence at the Geneva bank as proof of identity. Investigators subsequently found a birth certificate, passport and other documents bearing the same photograph and false name.

Without naming Ms Castanon, the Swiss statement said two Mexican nationals had been arrested and bank accounts containing millions of dollars had been blocked in Geneva and Zurich. "In collaboration with US and Mexican authorities," the statement added, "a judicial police inquiry is under way into several Mexican nationals for alleged activities in financing drug trafficking and laundering money from the traffic of drugs."

Former president Salinas was praised as an economic reformer while in office, but his reputation collapsed almost as soon as his term was over. Having been tipped as a possible leader of the new World Trade Organisation until the scandal broke, he left Mexico under a cloud earlier this year, having quarrelled publicly with his successor, Ernesto Zedillo. A few days earlier his brother had been arrested for allegedly or-



President Salinas: his reputation is tarnished

dering the assassination of Francisco Ruiz Massieu, the PRI secretary-general. The president's present whereabouts are not known, although *Reforma* newspaper reported yesterday that he had been sighted at the end of August in Cuba, using a false identity.

The arrest of Ms Castanon adds evidence of possible drug-dealing and corruption to a case of murder and betrayal among families at the top of Mexico's political structure. Even the brother of the assassinated politician is implicated. Having been put in charge of in-

vestigating the killing, Mario Ruiz Massieu, a former Deputy Attorney-General, is accused of trying to cover up Raul Salinas's alleged part in the murder plot. His previous job was heading the anti-narcotics work of the attorney-general's office; prosecutors now claim to have found nearly \$7m in bank accounts he opened in Texas.

The Mexican authorities say the latest arrests show that Raul Salinas amassed a fortune while his brother was in office, using a false identity and 30 bank accounts. They plan to question him in detention about the origin of the money his wife was trying to withdraw.

The man who carried out Francisco Ruiz Massieu's murder in September 1994, Daniel Aguilar Trevino, was arrested at the scene and sentenced to 50 years in prison. Police soon arrested a half a dozen alleged conspirators, but the key figure, Manuel Munoz Rocha, a congressman, disappeared soon after the killing, and prosecutors say they are afraid he may be dead. Raul Salinas has denied claims by some witnesses that he was close to Mr Munoz Rocha, and saw him after Ruiz Massieu was killed.



Bono, the lead singer of U2, at an awards ceremony in Paris at which he called President Jacques Chirac a "wanker". "What a city ... what a crowd, what a bomb, what a mistake, what a wanker you have for president," he said in receiving an MTV award this week. "What are you going to do about it?" he said to applause. The singer Jon Bon Jovi was among other artists who lambasted Mr Chirac for the nuclear tests France is holding in the Pacific, the latest of which was on Tuesday. Photograph: Reuters

## Nuclear stunt strikes fear in heart of Russia

PHIL REEVES  
Moscow

It may not compare with the havoc he caused when he took 1,000 Russians hostage, but Shamil Basayev will doubtless be rubbing his hands in glee after his latest stunt at the Kremlin's expense - the disclosure that a radioactive container was buried in the middle of Moscow.

Officials were compelled to use a network of sensors across the entire city to look for high radiation levels after the Chechen rebel disclosed the whereabouts of the "hot" package to a Russian television station, NTV, which tracked it down beneath a thin covering of snow in a park.

The Russian authorities, who sent three teams of emergency workers to the scene, sought to play down the affair by pointing out that the object was not particularly dangerous to human life, although it was giving off at least 30 times more radiation than the normal background level.

The Federal Security Service - one of the descendants of the KGB - said the object, found in Izmailova Park in east Moscow, contained caesium-137, which is used in cancer research and therapy.

Officials said that their city-wide monitoring, using a network of 46 mobile sensors, had found nothing unusual - al-

though this is small comfort to Muscovites, who know that the capital is dotted with hundreds of "hot" spots.

But the incident will have alarmed the Russian security services, which are bracing themselves for tomorrow's anniversary of the outbreak of fighting in Chechnya. Tensions in the republic have been further cranked up by the Yeltsin administration's plans to hold elections in Chechnya next month, which the rebels have vowed to disrupt.

Russia has long feared that the conflict will be brought to the streets of Moscow, a concern that has deepened in the last few days with the discovery and disposal of two mines near a city highway frequently used by government staff. Moscow officials yesterday announced they were tightening security on the streets, by throwing a new ring of police and traffic patrolmen around the city's perimeter, and stepping up patrols at airports and stations.

Although they claimed this was unrelated to Mr Basayev's latest exploits, he has been taunting the Kremlin since he masterminded the commando-style operation which led to the hostage-taking in a town in southern Russia last June. The nature of his threats will send a chill down the spine of the toughest security official: he talks of mounting raids on Russia's nuclear power stations.

## Pop star sees red as Kremlin poll hopefuls call tune

Moscow - Stop almost anyone in the street and you'll discover that Viktor Chernomyrdin, the Prime Minister, is not short of critics, writes Phil Reeves. You will meet pensioners without money or heating, soldiers without pay or clothing and women without jobs or housing. Now a new name can be added to the list: Glenn Hughes, ex-bass guitarist for Deep Purple.

A week ago, the British musician could not have picked out the grey-suited, balding Russian Prime Minister out of a police line-up of global politicians. Now, to his evident annoyance, he would have no difficulty, having been bombarded with images of the great man.

When Hughes agreed to give a concert in Moscow this week he thought it would be simply for "the Russian people". He had no idea the event was organised by Our Home Is Russia, the centrist party supported by President Boris Yeltsin and headed by Mr Chernomyrdin, who is desperately trying to cury favour with Russian trends before next month's parliamentary elections.

The guitarist was "mortified" when the press broke the news to him. "I didn't know anything about the situation behind this



Chernomyrdin: tricked Deep Purple man into playing

concert, so I really must apologise 101 per cent," he told a press conference, as he sat before a giant poster of the Prime Minister (whom he could not identify). "I feel really stupid right now, but I have a concert to do so I must compose myself." And off he went, to a stage bedecked with party posters.

The concert was one of a series organised by an offshoot of Mr Chernomyrdin's party. Russians may be new to electoral politics, but they are fast learning the tricks: the initiative's organiser told the *Moscow Times* his mission was to "cynically target youth by providing them with action shows", an understandable ambition, given that the party lags behind the Communists in the opinion polls.

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**Kurdish conflict:** Guerrilla leaders admit pointless feud has alienated former Western allies and brought comfort to Baghdad

## Warlords bewail fall of anti-Saddam front

**HUGH POPE**  
Salahuddin, Northern Iraq

Massoud Barzani twisted his hands in embarrassment. Even as a powerful protagonist, he agonised over the way Iraq's Kurds have frittered away Western goodwill and protection in an 18-month-old civil conflict that has split their opposition front against the Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein.

"We have ourselves to blame for the mess," the guerrilla leader said in an interview in his hilltop Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) headquarters, 250 miles north of Baghdad.

"People are frustrated, disappointed, and I don't blame them. We had so many hopes and ambitions that we would build democracy here."

On the other side of the

lightly-armed front lines in the nearby Iraqi Kurdish regional capital of Arbil, officials of Jalal Talabani's rival Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) spoke of the same shame.

"There is no hate. It is not like Lebanon. We are the same people, same religion," said Sadi Ahmed Piri, a PUK negotiator in the latest peace process that has been making hesitant progress since a cease-fire was agreed, somewhat bizarrely, in the Irish town of Drogheda in August.

British and American mediators descended on Salahuddin this month to push the talks forward. But the only test of success will be in the implementation, a problem that has undermined all previous promises to try to knit the 3.2 million

people of Iraqi Kurdistan together again.

Points of difference remain much the same as they have since a feud over a piece of land in March 1994 sparked the conflagration. Mr Barzani now controls the richest customs point on the Turkish border, which produces £36m of customs revenue per month. Mr Talabani controls the chief cities, Arbil and Sulaymaniyah, and about 70 per cent of the population.

Only if they can share these will anything meaningful come out of easily agreed points such as reconvening parliament, appointing a new regional government and holding new parliamentary elections, possibly in May 1996. Only then can the indebted, Western-backed Iraqi National Congress resume its role as a bridge between the two Kurdish groups, organising an alternative to President Saddam's rule in Baghdad.

Hundreds of Kurdish guerrillas have been killed in 18 months of meaningless fighting. In the last elections in 1992, both Kurdish factions got votes in each other's areas, even though Mr Barzani's KDP is a more tribal, popular among Kermanci-dialect Kurds, while Mr Talabani's PUK is more urban and left-wing, popular among Surani-dialect Kurds.

In the end, Kurdish observers fear, the system of two adjacent single-party fiefdoms will continue until a decades-old feud between the two men is decisively resolved. In the meantime, regional states have not sat idle. The mountain homeland of the 25 million Kurds is split between Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran, and all of them want to ensure that the Kurds neither unite or threaten their internal security.

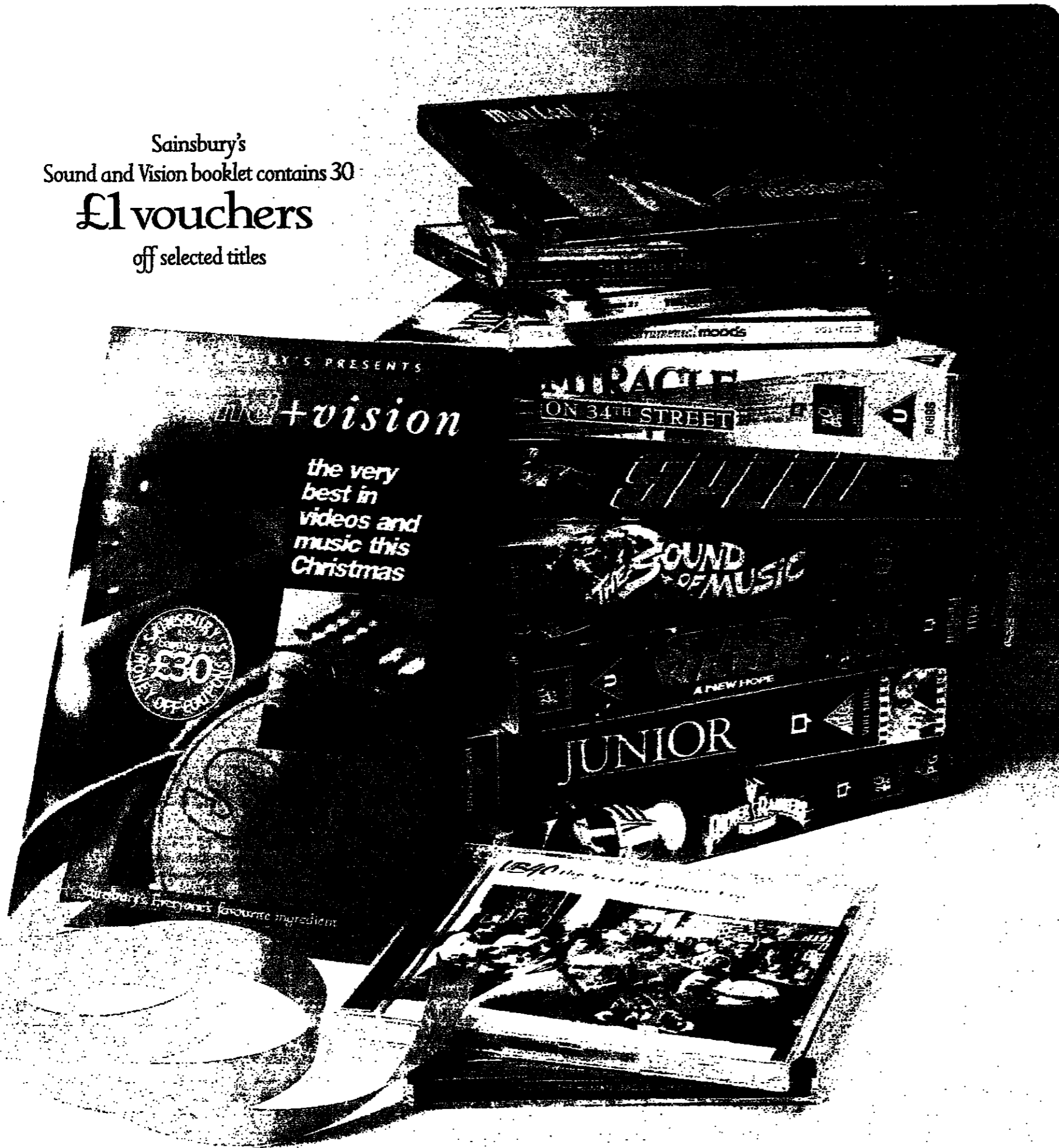
Damascus is manipulating the disruptive PKK. Turkish Kurds rebels that it sponsors into a position of power in northern Iraq. Hard-pressed Baghdad is being more conciliatory to all factions. Tehran is fast developing a special relationship with Mr Talabani's PUK.

Iranian aid delegations have multiplied their visits. The KDP alleges Mr Talabani has also closed down the Iranian Kurdish opposition radio, and has allowed the murder of 19 Iranian Kurdish activists.

"It's embarrassing and it's illogical. Enemies of the Kurds can now say the Kurds cannot rule themselves," said Sami Abdurrahman, Mr Barzani's chief negotiator. "All of us are supposed to be on the same ship. Our ship has not arrived at any shore. We are in the wildest sea and we are still fighting among ourselves."

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## Korea's Kim to punish his predecessors

**RICHARD LLOYD PARRY**  
Tokyo

The political scandal engulfing South Korea escalated yesterday when President Kim Young Sam ordered a law aimed at punishing his two military predecessors for a notorious massacre. A spokesman for Mr Kim's Democratic Liberal Party (DLP) said new legislation would allow the government to prosecute former presidents Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo, believed to have ordered the killing of hundreds of pro-democracy demonstrators in 1980, a year after gaining power in a military coup.

"I will make the special legislation an opportunity to demonstrate to the people that justice, truth and the law exist in this land," Mr Kim was quoted as saying by the DLP's secretary-general Kang Sam Jae.

The announcement is an about-turn for Mr Kim, whose own government has come under intense pressure since the uncovering of a separate political bribery scandal a month ago. Mr Roh, a former political ally of Mr Kim and founder of the DLP, has admitted amassing a huge political slush fund, alleged by prosecutors to have been extracted in the form of bribes from many of South Korea's biggest corporations.

A similar confession was made seven years ago by Mr Roh's own mentor, Mr Chun, who succeeded in living down the scandal by spending two years of self-imposed exile in a Buddhist monastery.

But Mr Roh's grovelling on national television early this month only intensified public

anger. A week ago he was jailed, pending charges of receiving bribes from 24 companies, including the massive Hyundai, Samsung and Daewoo conglomerates. Prosecutors told Korean reporters yesterday that the heads of the suspected companies would be charged soon, although they will not be placed in detention, "out of consideration for the effects it would have on the economy".

Corruption has long been assumed to be endemic but never before has it been exposed in such detail, or been pinned down to so many prominent names.

Mr Kim, the first elected president in almost four decades, came to power two years ago on a platform of anti-corruption legislation that has claimed more than a thousand businessmen and politicians, including members of his family. But the growing suspicion voiced by opposition leaders is that the President himself benefited from Mr Roh's \$650m (£430m) fund.

To make a clean break with its discredited founder, the DLP announced last week it will change its name before parliamentary elections next April.

The same desire to reassert his clean image in advance of any nasty revelations Mr Roh's trial brings must lie behind the decision to re-examine the Kwangju affair.

In May 1980, student demonstrators took to the streets in the south-western city after Mr Chun and Mr Roh seized power from the generals. Over 10 days, between 200 and 2,000 protesters were killed by troops acting on Mr Chun's orders.

### IN BRIEF

#### 600,000 Poles challenge election

Warsaw — The Polish Supreme Court has received more than 600,000 election protests, filed mainly by supporters of the defeated president Lech Walesa, most of them complaining that the winning candidate, the former Communist Aleksander Kwasniewski, falsely claimed to have graduated from university. AP

#### Mrs Mandela loses court battle

Johannesburg — Winnie Mandela, estranged wife of President Nelson Mandela of South Africa, lost her appeal against a court order to pay more than 100,000 rand (£20,000) for chartering a jet to Angola in 1987. The ruling followed an announcement that she had agreed this week to pay more than R500,000 to a bank threatening to foreclose on her mortgage. AP

#### Mahathir ready to step down

Kuala Lumpur — Malaysia's Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, reminding his United Malays National Organisation that he was now 70, said he would "soon" hand over power to his deputy, Anwar Ibrahim, 47, indicating for the first time that he is ready to step down after 14 years in office. Mr Anwar has repeatedly denied that there is a power struggle in the party, although his supporters have openly said that it is time for Dr Mahathir to step down. AP

#### Women plead for Kashmir hostages

New Delhi — The wives and girlfriends of four Western hostages in Kashmir, including the Britons Keith Mangan and Paul Wells, asked their captors to give up the demand that the men be swapped for imprisoned guerrillas. The women supported the Indian government's refusal to discuss an exchange. AP

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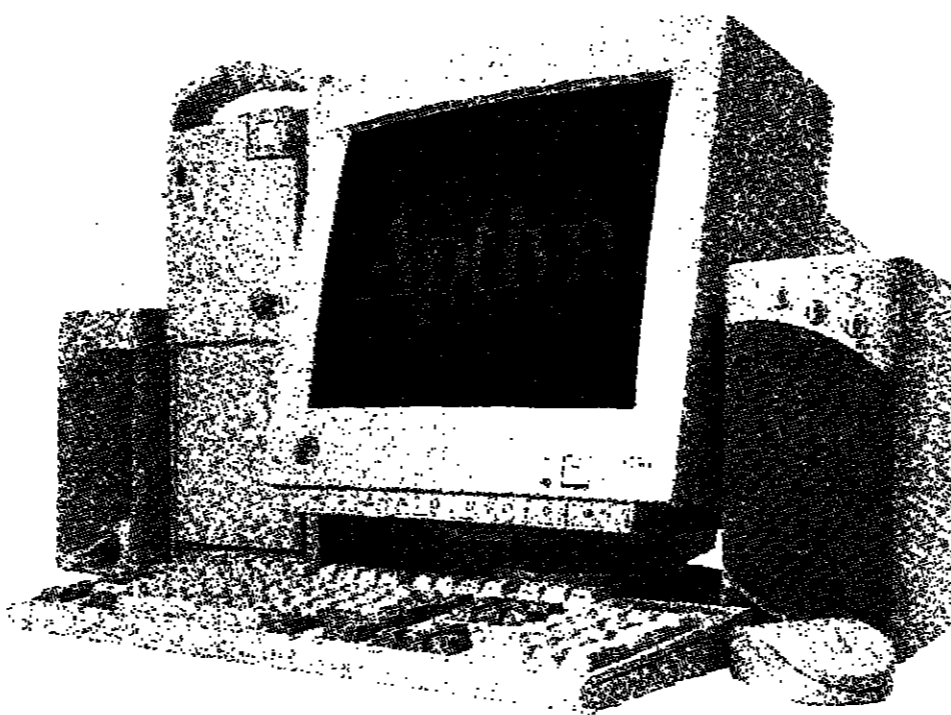
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# Muslim troops loot UN base in Bosnia

Photograph: AP





Soaked: A peanut farmer wading through storm water in south-east Queensland, Australia. After two years of drought – the longest in memory – the area has received up to 250mm (10in) of rain in the past week  
Photograph: Patrick Hamilton/Reuters

## Tyranny in Nigeria: Abacha junta tries desperately to limit damage caused by hanging of Saro-Wiwa

# Generals move to the offensive

DAVID ORR  
Lagos

As pressure mounts for tougher measures against Nigeria, it appears the country's dictator, General Sani Abacha, is searching desperately for a damage-limitation programme.

He apparently did not foresee the international opprobrium which followed the executions of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other minority-rights activists two weeks ago. The cabinet, which had met only three times in the past year, convened in emergency session for two days running this week to devise a strategy in response to the outburst of international outrage over the hangings. A 33-member National Committee of Traditional Rulers and Leaders

of Thought has been assembled to advise the cabinet in the face of Nigeria's growing isolation.

If General Abacha misjudged international opinion, it is also true the world failed to understand him. Diplomats here – those who remain since more than 30 were withdrawn in protest over the executions – are asking themselves what it is that impels such a regime to behave as it does. It had become obvious long before the executions that Nigeria's rulers are not motivated by the concerns of ordinary politicians. Having ousted a four-month-old civilian government – the only one in 12 years of otherwise uninterrupted military rule – General Abacha demolished all democratic institutions. Hundreds of opponents of the government have been detained under military decrees.

This is a regime that does not believe in the rule of law. Those who stand in General Abacha's way are regarded as enemies and dealt with summarily. This is not a government which entertains notions of public accountability. He has never held a news conference and has granted only a single interview. His speeches and public appearances are rare; he remains largely inscrutable, receiving visitors late at night or in the early hours of the morning.

"His fellow officers fear rather than respect him," says a newspaper editor. "He is very strong-willed and has deadly instincts. He is ruthless, ready to stake his life on what he is doing. There is little chance of a coup to oust him, because he is so powerful and has such a firm grip on the nation's security apparatus. He's a good infantry man, very strong on tactics."

The longest-serving high-ranking officer in the current regime, General Abacha received his military training in Britain in the Sixties and Seventies. He became Chief of Army Staff in 1985 and later Minister of Defence. He played a brisk game of double-dealing during the short-lived civilian government of 1993 before installing himself in power in November of that year.

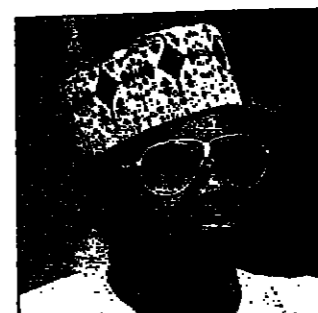
"He obviously felt it was his turn to hold the reins and, given the mess that preceded him, many regarded him as a sort of saviour," says a diplomat. "He's clearly got no ideological position and in a sense he's got little political ambition. He's first and foremost a military man and he regards power as a reward in itself." The cynical view is that the military's aim is to line

their pockets while wearing smart uniforms: certainly there are ample opportunities for top brass to secure hefty kick-backs from awarding contracts to the highest bidders.

"They're a greedy, ill-educated, useless bunch who've no idea how to run a modern country," says a diplomat. But there may be more to it than that: one editor suggests General Abacha and his cronies believe they are acting in Nigeria's best interests.

The military believe the political class is unfit to govern. Nigeria has been ruled by military juntas for 25 of the past 35 years. If their record has not been exemplary, it cannot be said civilian governments have fared much better in improving the lot of ordinary Nigerians.

Unlike civilian politicians, who are led by largely ethnic and sectional interests, the army is recruited on a broad cross-regional basis; there is a deep-rooted commitment to the preservation of the Nigerian federation. Some professionals and businessmen concede that the economy – for better-off



Abacha: Believes he acts in Nigeria's best interests

Nigerians at least – is looking healthier since General Abacha introduced liberalising measures earlier this year.

But the competence of the military to govern, at the most basic level, is open to doubt. The country is falling apart: people are struggling to put food on their tables; crime and corruption are endemic. "There is no real organisation," says one diplomat. There is a story of one minister sacked last March who, during 15 months in government, sent only two memos to General Abacha. He received no reply to either.

The three-year period of transition to civilian rule announced on 1 October is already off the rails.

There has been no approval of a draft constitution, no electoral commission has been appointed, nor have other key committees been set up.

## Drug lord turns Cambodia into a 'mafia state'

STEPHEN VINES  
Hong Kong

It was not supposed to turn out like this. The international community, through the United Nations, spent an unprecedented \$3bn to shepherd Cambodia towards democracy, protect it from the Khmer Rouge and install a democratically elected government.

Disillusion is too weak a word to describe what has happened since the last United Nations troops pulled out in 1993. The hoped-for democracy has been replaced by an increasingly intolerant and ruthless government with strong ties to big-league drug smugglers. The voices of opposition are being quickly snuffed out.

The most recent opposition figure to feel the government's wrath is Prince Norodom Sirivudh, half-brother of King Norodom Sihanouk, and uncle of Norodom Ranariddh, who is supposed to be one of Cambodia's co-prime ministers.

In theory the ties of family should have made him safe but his arrest on sketchy charges of attempting to assassinate the other co-prime minister, Hun Sen, speaks volumes about who is really in charge.

Prince Sirivudh is both an MP and secretary-general of the royalist Funcinpec party, which won the election.

Mr Hun Sen's former Communist Cambodian People's Party was brought into the government in an attempt to secure national reconciliation.

Yet it is Mr Hun Sen and his colleagues who call the shots and in effect tell the royal family what to do.

Mr Hun Sen is a sombre 44-year-old, whose guerrilla back-

ground in the Khmer Rouge left an instinct for authoritarian government.

The only pressure King Sihanouk appeared to be able to exert on his half-brother's behalf was to get him moved from the T-3 prison to the less uncomfortable surroundings of detention in the Ministry of the Interior.

Some observers in the Cambodian capital, Phnom Penh, remain unsure how Mr Hun Sen managed to achieve what amounts to a coup d'état. Others maintain that it comes down to a matter of money.

Mr Hun Sen was prepared to throw in his lot with the shadowy businessman Theng Bunma, who is not only reputed to be the richest man in Cambodia but also an international-league drug-runner.

The funds supplied by Mr Bunma and his associates are said to have provided the means to secure the loyalty of a large section of the state apparatus, particularly the armed forces, whose allegiance to ideology is far weaker than their need for money. In return, the Hun Sen-led government has allowed Cambodia to become a major drug-trafficking centre.

The most vocal critic of government corruption, the former finance minister Sam Rainsy, is dicing with death by breaking with the regime and attempting to establish an opposition party. He describes Cambodia as a "mafia state".

Cambodian journalists who have attempted to expose government corruption are no less vulnerable. The editor of the *Voice of Khmer Youth* was shot dead after publishing a detailed exposé of Mr Bunma's background and drug dealing.

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## the saturday story



Princess Diana hit Buenos Aires this week after dropping her bombshell on 'Panorama'. Phil Davison reports on her mixed reception



## The roving ambassador starts work

The tango metaphors were inevitable. The royal correspondents and photographers who came to Argentina with the Princess of Wales were praying that President Carlos Menem, a tango aficionado, would grab Diana for a post-lunch cheek-to-cheek.

The image of the little president with the tinged hair and Cuban heels propelling the princess across the dance floor was just too tempting. But by all accounts, their lunch at the presidential residence of Los Olivos yesterday adhered strictly to protocol, with the president's daughter acting as First Lady.

It was, however, a tango of sorts that Princess Diana embarked on when she touched down in Buenos Aires on Thursday morning. It was billed by the princess and the embassy as a Mother Teresa-style visit by invitation from Argentinean charities, but she was by far the highest-profile British visitor to these shores since the Falklands war.

And for the princess it was a chance to prove her fitness for the role of "roving ambassador" - the job she asked for in her explosive *Panorama* interview, shown on the eve of her visit.

If she came as a goodwill ambassador, she was greeted with everything from mild hostility, through widespread indifference, to curiosity and even star-worship.

For the latter, Argentines have rather a nice-sounding word, *cholo*, roughly translatable as "being star-struck". With the possible exception of Maradona, Mr Menem is considered at once its leading subject and practitioner.

He has posed with the Rolling Stones and played football with Maradona, and his private life has become one of the country's most

closely-followed soap operas, featuring his broken marriage and alleged affairs. Yesterday, it was the princess's turn to experience the charm of the man they call "el Jefe" - the chief.

According to British officials, Princess Diana would not talk politics. But most Argentinean analysts said the president would have found a polite way of raising the Falklands, still a burning issue here. After the princess has gone, he can be expected to spread the word that Diana's visit was a key step in his stated effort to win the Atlantic islands back by diplomacy by the end of the decade.

She was invited to Argentina by a group of charities representing her favourite causes ("battered this, battered that" as she described them to Martin Bashir). But in Argentina there has been speculation that the foreign ministry was behind the invitation - keen to gain the public relations coup of her visit.

Her entourage was small. She was accompanied by a detective and a lady in waiting and her press secretary, Geoffrey Crawford. He announced that he is leaving her service, as he was kept in the dark as she prepared her *Panorama* interview. Contact between the two has been minimal during the visit, which Mr Crawford was unable to avoid. The princess is staying at the British embassy's residence, and although embassy staff stress that the visit is not an official one, they give the princess regular briefings.

Above all, the audience for this visit is the international press corps. At several visits the crowds attracted by the princess have been outnumbered by reporters and photographers. Their work started on the British Airways flight when tabloid

reporters who had forked out serious money to share the first-class section of the aircraft with the princess, no doubt hoping she might pour out her heart, found themselves "scooped" by a local paper reporter - who was not even on the flight.

An enterprising journalist from the Argentinean daily *Clarín* managed to get the seat behind the princess and reported in great detail how she had rubbed cream on her legs and read a book entitled *The Manual of Mental Health*. However, the same newspaper reported that the princess was accompanied by a certain aristocrat called Lady Inwaiting.

The princess was herself almost scooped by Salman Rushdie, who surfaced here just before she did, giving a series of interviews to push his book *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Then she had to compete for headlines with Maradona, who "disappeared" when he was supposed to be training for a key match. He later resurfaced, grabbing the headlines again.

Then there was the story of a former Nazi, Erich Priebke, extradited to Italy last week to face charges that he helped to massacre more than 300 Italians during the war. It was not the extradition itself that grabbed attention but the fact that local Argentine policemen gave him warm hugs before he boarded his plane.

But Diana outclassed them all, largely thanks to the interview, which turned what would have been a relatively low-key visit for Argentines - who are by and large not interested in the British or in monarchies - into front-page news. The famous interview undoubtedly deflected attention from the



princess's charitable goal. While the vast majority of Argentines had expressed a total lack of interest in her visit, the headlines along the lines of "I did it with my riding instructor" stirred a certain amount of curiosity.

Those who watched extracts from the interview, with a Spanish voiceover, engaged in this country's leading middle-class pastime - psychoanalysis. Many spoke of "the sadness in her eyes." That led them

to be pleasantly surprised when she emerged breezy and beaming here on Thursday.

She soon earned herself a new nickname. "The mute princess," said the leading daily *La Nación*, describing her habit of pretending the 350 closely-following newsmen did not exist.

That was somewhat unfair, for she happily spoke through an interpreter to disabled children, battered wives and others at a series of homes and hospitals. When a 30-year-old woman with one leg said she was training to swim the Channel in 1997, the princess told her to get in touch, via the embassy, beforehand and "I'll see what I can do to help." Her credentials as an ambassador - or indeed an international "Queen of Hearts" - were most obvious here - there did seem to be a genuine rapport when she met ordinary people.

When 69-year-old Amira Chede shouted "Diana, mi amor" from behind a barrier outside the Garrahan paediatric hospital, the princess walked over and gave her a kiss. "Don't worry, all women are with you," Mrs Chede said in Spanish. The princess may not have understood the words but Mrs Chede's solidarity was clearly related to the *Panorama* interview.

While she was warmly welcomed by most of those she met, there was a *leitmotif* of sarcasm in most of the local press coverage. "She's like a fish in water," meaning "she feels right at home," wrote a columnist in the daily *Página 12* who suggested

the visit was essentially a propaganda exercise orchestrated by Mr Menem to divert attention from the country's economic woes.

The fact that she was so much taller than Mr Menem - in fact than most people she met - was also a talking point. "If she hadn't been a princess, she could have been a basketball player," wrote a local reporter. And a local TV talk-show host hounded the princess throughout the early part of her trip, at one point shouting: "I love you, Lady," and tossing her a fluffy toy.

Since the visit was described as unofficial - "a private visit with elements of work," said the British embassy - the princess aroused little interest in Argentine political circles. Her itinerary was kept well away from controversy, avoiding such traps as the capital's central Plaza de Mayo where, on the day she arrived, the so-called Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo were demonstrating, as they do every Thursday, in favour of action against those who "disappeared" their sons and daughters during the so-called Dirty War of the military regimes of the Seventies.

Many Argentines said Prince Charles might have elicited more vocal protests among those who demand the return of the Falklands to Argentine sovereignty, but that the Princess had to a certain extent disarmed such people.

There were hardly any protests as she went from venue to venue - although one woman, the mother of a soldier killed in the Falklands, shouted insults at her before being hustled away by police. Later a senior Argentine naval officer, Admiral Enrique Molina Pico, expressed sympathy for the woman: "I understand and respect her personal feelings ... and if the lady

really suffered the loss of a son, which is a loss that has no parallel, well, she expressed her feelings." Some Falklands war veterans said the visit was inappropriate and designed to "seduce public opinion and cast a smokescreen over the debate about the sovereignty of our Malvinas." But others said it might help to create warmer relations between Britain and Argentina.

The princess herself had used a similar phrase during the *Panorama* interview. Here, the phrase is often seen as a euphemism for Britain eventually ceding the Falklands.

Today the princess visits the small Patagonian town of Gaiman. She will sail in a catamaran in the hope of seeing the renowned friendly whales jumping off the Atlantic coast before taking tea and cakes in a traditional Welsh tea house in Gaiman.

The locals, most of whom arrived from Wales at the end of the 19th century, still speak Welsh and she will be greeted by Welsh singing and dancing. The small minority who do oppose her visit, saying she represents "the usurper monarchy which enslaved Wales," have promised to stay at home.

At least among the *farandula*, the local in-crowd of artists and stars with whom Mr Menem likes to be seen, her visit was the high-point at least of the month. Invitations to her private dinner with the British ambassador, Sir Peter Hall, on Thursday night were more coveted than tickets for tomorrow's crucial football league match between Maradona's Boca Juniors and river Plate.

"They were murdering each other to get the ambassador to invite them," said an embassy staffer.

## Jo Brand's week



The end of the tour seems to be in sight. Theoretically, sitting in a car for a few hours a day and then delivering an hour's worth of comedy shouldn't be too wearing, but we are knackered. Perhaps if we went to bed at 11 with cocoa and a hot water bottle every night we wouldn't be, but the whole tour crew has developed an obsession with the nastiest card game ever invented - Black Maria, the main object of which seems to be to dump the Queen of Spades on an opponent, losing them 50 points. Feelings run very high and it becomes clearer and clearer to me how wars start.

Touring gives you a real insight into local mentalities too, from Aberystwyth, where front-page news is that someone has broken into a phone box, to Nottingham, where on a Tuesday night at 7.30 the whole audience seemed to be mad, drunk and slightly hysterical (why Tuesday?). Hull proved, against expectations, to be a joy, despite the fact that a visit to a fantastic women's centre on a very deprived estate resulted in a few kids jumping up and down on the car and denting the roof. They also reminded us of a few choice Anglo-Saxon words in the dust on the car. I was just glad they didn't nick it, really.

I enjoyed the reaction to the Diana *Panorama* extravaganza more than I enjoyed the programme itself - the *Daily Telegraph* letters page excelled itself with Lady Someone-or-other regretting the demise of the role of the Tower of London and some bloke called Kevin (who's probably just been checked by a woman) portraying the whole shebang as an exercise in cunning female wiles. The Hewitt geezer comes out of the whole thing as a waste of space. He is reported as saying he helped Diana a lot. If blowing the gaff on their intimate secrets is helping a lot, then I am a catwalk model.

The chief executive of Yorkshire Television has said that ITV viewers are not greatly interested in serious news at peak viewing times. He feels that what they want is news that affects them personally from their own region. I have been on the receiving end over the past six weeks of numerous local news programmes and I am fairly sure that is not what they want, unless of course they live in the Gloucester area, where they would be fed an endless diet of gore and human failings in the West case.

If television companies are going to personalise the news, why don't

they just have a separate news programme for each family? This could report on how grandma did at the bingo or feature mum's corns or the children's recent marks for geography homework.

Antipodeans are none too keen on our figureheads. Apparently, not content with attempting to oust the Queen, they are now having a pop at her understudy, Baroness Thatcher. Four members of the New South Wales



Why don't they love her?

parliament walked out when she was allowed the rare privilege of sitting in a ceremonial chair. Any throne will do, it seems.

Klingon, the language from *Star Trek*, can now be studied at degree level. How very useful ... and I thought a joint sociology and psychology degree might not go far in the job market. Anita Karr, who at least acknowledges herself as "a sad old Trekky", remarks that the Bible is being translated into Klingon as well, although why that should encourage Trekkies to read it is beyond me.

Many comics on the comedy circuit



Why do they love him?

are fans of *Star Trek* and include routines about it in their sets. I'm afraid these bits bore me to tears, but I appreciated it one night when a comic was struggling with some *Star Trek* material and a heckler shouted out: "It's comedy, Jim - but not as we know it."

Brian Mawhinney, he of the paint-spattered jacket, has received a formal apology from the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Paul Condon, because it took 18 minutes for the police to arrive on the scene. He remarked that the officers involved are "very distressed". I bet they are, after they've had the biggest bollocking of their career. Thank God it was only Mr Mawhinney's dignity that was hurt.

I thought the reason given for the delay was fantastic. The call was relayed to a special operations centre which had been closed by the time the call was passed on. Which special operations centre would that be, then? The one dealing with Queen Victoria's coronation, or maybe the one set up to tackle those dreadful suffragettes? Reassuring to know the rozzers are on the ball, isn't it?

Diverse musical taste is always a problem in the car on tour, with neither myself, the tour manager, or the other act really wanting to force our preferences on the others. This has resulted in quite a lot of Radio 1 at various times and the realisation that certain songs are played endlessly. The only song that gets the thumbs-up on the increased volume scale is "Gangsta's Paradise" by Coolio and LV, because this is a brilliant reworking of a great Stevie Wonder song. Cover versions as usual abound on the airwaves, being distinguished mainly by the fact that the original was better. Please, can someone write some new good songs before I smash the radio up?

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PROFILE: Gerry Robinson

# Happily eating into Forte

Granada's boss isn't the type to bag pheasants: he has bigger game in his sights, says Mathew Horsman

Next to Granada headquarters in Golden Square, central London, stands the mighty Regent Palace Hotel, one of 900 properties worldwide run by Britain's largest hotel operator, Forte. A small sign on one of the side entrances reads: "Forte recruitment next door."

Certainly Sir Rocco Forte, the international hotelier, does not intend to recruit the help of anyone next door at Granada. But he may have no choice. For he finds himself on the receiving end of what promises to be a very hostile takeover bid from the rentals, television and catering giant.

It is hard to see the affable Gerry Robinson, 47, being in the least bit hostile. Granada's chief executive is quick to laugh – really belly laughs, the kind you cannot help but join in – but he is mischievous, even devious, too. When told last week that Sir Rocco had been on a pheasant shoot in Yorkshire at the time Granada's £3.3bn bid was being unveiled in London, he responded: "I get invited on shoots all the time. I just can't stand the idea of doing it."

The comment is nicely judged. He has said nothing against his adversary, but has managed all the same to draw a distinct line between them. Sir Rocco is the kind of man who isn't on the spot when his company's fortunes are at risk. Moreover, he is on a "shoot", that quintessential pastime of the idle rich (even if, like Irish-born Robinson, Sir Rocco comes from less-than-aristocratic origins); meanwhile, Robinson is in the City, taking questions from institutional investors, journalists and financial analysts.

Even in its blindsided attack on Forte's poor performance of late, Robinson's Granada has put its criticisms carefully. The assets – ranging from "trophy" hotels such as Grosvenor House and the luxury George V in Paris to roadside restaurants such as the Happy Eater chain – have been "under-managed", and shareholders have

not received the kind of value they deserve.

Compare that light touch with Sir Rocco's response to the bid: "He [Robinson] has no skills to run a hotels business. The closest he gets to marketing is his big mouth."

Later, in a conversation in the corner office of Granada headquarters, Robinson warms to the "us and them" theme without drawing undue attention. Describing the three years of work that he and his second-in-command Charles Allen put into charting the prospects of a bid for Forte, he says: "I have been in a lot of Happy Eaters and in a lot of Forte hotels. Of course, most people would expect me to be better at judging the Posthouse in Ipswich than the George V in Paris."

"Forte is viewed as being a high-class hotel company," Robinson says smoothly. "It isn't. It makes most of its money from mid-market hotels and motorside restaurants. So it makes a lot of sense for Granada to be interested."

Translation: Sir Rocco has pretensions to being an international, high-class hotelier; Robinson none. A self-made man of the people, then, and proud of it. Ninth in a fam-

ily of 10 children, born in Donegal, Ireland, Robinson studied for the priesthood, then worked at a Matchbox toy factory, rising to plant manager at 22. After stints at Lesney Products, Lex and Coca-Cola (together with studies in accountancy), he joined GrandMet, the food and drinks giant, and led a management buy-out of the catering division in 1987. The resulting company, Compass, was a huge success, and earned him a personal fortune rumoured to be at least £5m.

whole layers of management were removed: even senior staff at Granada Television, the jewel of the ITV crown, got the boot. So unpopular was the restructuring that the comedian John Cleese famously wrote to Robinson, saying, "F\*\*\* off out of it, you ignorant upstart caterer."

Since then the two men have made their peace and Granada has prospered. By the time it took over LWT, in another acrimonious battle that this time pitted Robinson against Roland Rat's creator, the television guru Greg Dyke, most people thought Robinson was a real television man after all.

Critics still complain that he turned the grand old Granada, high-minded and intellectual, into "just another ITV company". Well maybe. But that probably has more to do with the Broadcasting Act 1990 than with Robinson.

Through it all, Robinson kept his cool. He tells fine tales about the great and less great in television, dropping names without appearing pretentious. But he will tell none of them on the record: typically, he doesn't want to cause offence.

Behind the jollity, the easy manner and the deviousness lies a very good, if at times brutal manager. Granada/LWT is a powerhouse among programmer-broadcasters; the rentals business is profitable despite cut-throat competition; the catering business, centred on the motorway services division, has much better margins than its rivals.

The key to his success has been a highly decentralised management, with managers in the field given room to perform. Cost-cutting, firm cash and credit controls and regular head-office accounting



Unlike Rocco Forte, Gerry Robinson is no workaholic. "Most work is pointless" Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

complete the strategy. But woe to the under-performer, the line manager who misses his target.

"People love to make their businesses appear complicated," he says. "Most are not. Hotels are about three things: managing pricing, managing costs and managing capacity." Likewise: "Television is about programming. If you have good programmes, you will succeed." He and chief operating officer Allen are about to put that to a further test, rolling out as many as four new satellite channels by next year, fed in part by gems from the Granada library.

Robinson finds he can get his work done easily between 9am and 6pm. Weekend work is out of the question. "I think most work is pointless," he says. "There are only three or four things you do a day that have any effect on your business. The rest is a waste of time."

While Robinson won't say it, the implication is clear. The notorious workaholic Sir Rocco, who works through dinner and on weekends, heads a company that has posted disappointing results in recent years. Robinson is chief executive of a growing, profitable operation, effortlessly providing shareholders with good value. Odds are, he'll win.

People love to make their businesses appear complicated. Most are not

## Running on the road to nowhere

Should doctors prescribe exercise? Jim White, a bored gym-goer, thinks not

This morning began as most mornings do. After scraping the evening's accumulation of mould from the perma-dampness of my training shoes, slipping on a T-shirt effused with the fine odour of yesterday's armpit, squeezing into a pair of 1985 vintage Manchester United away shorts – I started up the running machine in the office gym and began to creak. I then ran, on the spot, as the treadmill beneath my feet span slowly away.

Seventeen minutes later, when I stopped the machine, four things had happened. A thick and unattractive medalion of sweat had colonised my T-shirt; four tracks of Oasis's *(What's the Story) Morning Glory* had played on the gym's CD machine; nine Docklands Light Railway trains had stuttered out of Canary Wharf station; and, through the pain and nausea, I had a recurring vision of a caged hamster running, pointlessly, in its wheel.

This is what we have come to in the convenience age. Nothing requires any physical effort any more; television channels can be altered from the prone position; lawn mowers don't need to be rope-cranked; with a deluxe smooth-glide corkscrew there isn't even a struggle opening a bottle of claret. Thanks to this easy life we are developing into a nation of ladies and wheezers, who can't climb the stairs unless attached to a canister of oxygen. What we are facing is nothing less than the gradual Americanisation of our hips. And the only way to fight the descent to the inevitable moment when you lose all visual connection with your toes is to work at it. We must all start behaving, in short, like caged rodents.

This was certainly the view propounded this week by Murdo Wallace, the chairman and founder of the Wright Foundation. At about the time I quit the machine of pain, Mr Wallace was launching a scheme that sought to empty the nation's doctor's waiting-rooms and fill the nation's gyms. His view was that if we were all encouraged on to the treadmill by doctors, the benefits would be immense: less sickness, less stress, less drug dependency, greater self-esteem, acres of cellulite wiped from the human landscape at a stroke. Free gym membership

on the NHS, he called for: expensive in the short term, but cost-effective in the long. And since most doctors appear to be set on smoking, drinking and stressing themselves into casualty, it might not be a bad idea if the first gym prescriptions they scribbled were their own.

There is indeed much to suggest that gyms work better at preventing illness than doctors' surgeries. For a start, unlike any doctor's waiting-room I have visited, gyms tend to be full of fit, healthy people (though the *Independent's* staff facility may be an exception). Also, if you have a heart attack in a gym, you are likely to be attended to by staff immediately, whereas keel over at your local NHS facility and you'd have to wait an hour before service is marked prioritised. And – though again this depends on the gym you frequent – gym staff rarely offer drugs as a first resort.

But there is one significant problem in this idea of Wallace's: the nature of gym exercise itself. Any visitor from another planet happening upon the Canary Wharf fitness centre would see the co-ordinates for home straight away. Everywhere you look, all you see is madness: people rowing nowhere, people climbing stairs to nowhere, people squatting with a large weight between their thighs and lifting it rhythmically to an M People track while indicating extreme pain; in short, as sharp a metaphor for the pointlessness of human existence as you can find.

At the end of every running-on-the-spot session, wasting hours that could be more profitably employed, say, twiddling my thumbs, the thing that invariably springs to my mind is that old Frank Sinatra tale. Told by his doctor that if he stopped drinking, smoking and chasing women he would live longer, Sinatra replied that, no, it would only feel like he lived longer.

Perhaps, now that Mr Wallace has made the first move in a closer liaison between the medical and the exercise establishments, what is required is further co-operation: the use of selective anaesthetic to dull the pain. Knock you out before you start, wake you up when you've finished – with an offer like that, the country's gyms would be fuller than a body-builder's G-string.

## Time for a little daylight – and sanity

There is a good chance that dark winter afternoons – and GMT – will vanish. Peter Popham can't wait

Thanks to the luck of the parliamentary draw, an overwhelmingly logical reform should soon be enacted which, at no cost to anyone, will improve the nation's health, cut crime and deaths on the road, and increase tourism and exports.

John Butterfill, Conservative MP for Bournemouth West, wants to kill off Greenwich Mean Time, putting our clocks forward one hour in winter and an extra hour in summer. His Bill to bring this about came top of the annual ballot of private members' bills on Thursday. Mr Butterfill claims the support of 160 MPs of all parties: if the Government does not block the Bill, our clocks could change for good by the end of 1997.

If it comes to pass, this will mean dark breakfasts and gloomy journeys to school or work in winter: at the end of December it will be dark in London until about 9am, in Glasgow until 9.45 and in Inverness until nearly 10am. But in exchange, we will get our afternoons back: at the same season, London will be light until nearly 5pm, Glasgow until 4.45, even Inverness until 4.30. And as the days begin to lengthen into the New Year, winter-time activities inconceivable during the afternoon for most of this century – tennis without floodlights, gardening, daylight dog-walking – will once again become possible.

The reform still has its stubborn opponents. Scottish MPs of all stripes are leery of it, because it will cast much of Scotland into gloom for half the morning. Farm workers will get frost-bite, building workers will struggle with iced-up materials, postmen will have the working hours of a bat. Most emotively of all, they say, children will be struck down by cars as they pitch their way to school through the pitch black. "John Butterfill is a would-be time bandit," Alex Salmond, leader of the SNP, said yesterday, "threatening Scotland with daylight robbery."

But ranged against the Scottish



Scottish question: will the threat of gloom in the Highlands kill the latest bid to bury GMT? Colin McPherson

MPs is an increasingly broad spectrum of opinion throughout the country who see the reform as long overdue. More and more people are buying into the arguments of Dr Mayer Hillman, of the Policy Studies Institute, whose report on the subject got the ball rolling in the mid-1980s.

The key objection to the reform, he acknowledges, is the fear of children being hit by cars on the way to school: it was the increase in the number of these accidents that scuppered a similar reform when it was introduced experimentally in the late Sixties. Such fears are more than outweighed, however, by the decrease in such deaths and injuries at other times of the day. "What people overlooked," says Dr Hillman, "is that children make far more journeys other than to and from school. More than 80 per cent of traffic accidents in which children are

killed or seriously injured occur when they are not going to or from school." They happen, in other words, after school – and would be far less likely to happen if afternoons were lighter.

At present, Dr Hillman argues, children and old people are effectively subject to a winter curfew, while the rest of us lose hours every day that could be spent on healthy outdoor pursuits. Putting the clocks forward an hour in winter and an extra hour in summer, he calculates, would give us 12 per cent extra time for what he calls "daylight-dependent activities" at weekends, and 35 per cent extra on weekdays.

To appreciate how we arrived in our present unenlightened state, a brief history of British time is in order. Greenwich Mean Time only prevailed with the establishment of the railway network. Up until then, every town in

England had its local time, computed from the moment the sun was due south at noon. Between London and Plymouth, for example, there was a time difference of 16 minutes. With the creation of railways and railway timetables, time throughout the country was homogenised as GMT.

But the disadvantages of GMT were soon recognised. It is instructive to discover that on the two occasions this century when efficient use of time became a national priority – in the world wars – GMT was modified. Summer time was introduced during the First World War. In the last war a fiendishly complicated system was adopted whereby the clocks were put forward twice – in February and May – and then back twice – in August and November – to make optimum use of the available daylight.

In 1968, "British Standard Time"

was introduced for an experimental three-year period, whereby time – GMT plus one hour – was fixed throughout the year. But parliamentary excitement caused by children's deaths and injuries in the mornings persuaded the government to revert to GMT in 1971 – despite the fact that overall there had been a reduction in accidents involving children. As Dr Hillman points out, it is easier to make political capital out of children who have died than out of children who haven't.

The last serious attempt to put the clocks forward, in 1989, was scuppered when Margaret Thatcher banned all controversial new legislation in the wake of the poll tax fiasco. This time round, despite public diffidence from both front benches, it should stand a better chance of success. Public opinion has increasingly swung the reformers' way; even Scottish opinion is divided evenly and the National Farmers' Union is now neutral. Besides Scottish MPs, only the building industry remains doggedly opposed. The suggestion that it go the way of Scandinavia and start the working day an hour later has gone down like a frozen breeze block.

What should our new time be called? The Home Office has dubbed it Single Double Summer Time, though a less resonant (or comprehensible) rallying cry is hard to conceive. The obvious alternative is Central European Time – though John Butterfill is quick to reassure waverers that "if they don't want to be associated with Central European Time, they can call it anything else they like."

One of the principal benefits of the reform will be to bring us into line with the rest of Western Europe all year round. But nobody seems in a hurry to point this out: the wrath of the Euro-sceptics is easily roused. And it would be tragic if this sane reform were to be aborted again – for another bad reason.

## Stuck for Christmas gift ideas?

Then look no further... How about giving someone a real live elephant this year? Because a foster parent to Aitong – it's a great way to become directly involved in her care, and the perfect gift to give or receive this Christmas.



Aitong was only a few days old when she was rescued – the tiny elephant had been badly trampled when her family fled in panic from poachers' guns. Miraculously her life was saved but now she needs your help.

Become a foster parent to Aitong and support the constant care of this helpless orphan. She needs bottle-feeding every 4 hours and still suffers nightmares as she remembers her lost family.

One day all the little elephants on our fostering programme will learn to live independently in the wild, but this is a long way off for Aitong. Help us to give her a future full of hope. Join our fostering programme and help provide the milk, food and loving care she so urgently needs.

And you won't just get a feeling of involvement...

For just £19.95 (of which \$14.00 is your donation to the elephants), you'll also receive a fantastic fostering gift pack including:

- A personalised certificate
- A colour photograph of Aitong
- A fostering window sticker
- A VHS video featuring Aitong and all the orphans



Order before Friday 3rd December to guarantee delivery before Christmas...

Yes! I would like to foster Aitong for the person I have nominated below:

Person making payment: Foster parent:  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send gift pack to: The foster parent ☐ The person making payment ☐  
I enclose a cheque/postal order (Payable to Care for the Wild) ☐  
or debit my credit card (Details below) ☐

Visa/Mastercard No. \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount £ \_\_\_\_\_ (If the recipient is abroad add £3.00 Europe £5.00 elsewhere)

If you would like further information about Care for the Wild please tick here ☐  
Care for the Wild, 1 Ashdale, Harrogate Road, Rye, East Sussex RH12 4QP



Unit trusts/data

# unit trusts/data

15

## Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING			DOLLAR			D-MARK
Country	Spot	1 month 3 months	Spot	1 month 3 months		
US	1.5808	1.57	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Canada	2.1304	2.13	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65
France	1.3608	1.36	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16
Italy	1.3608	1.36	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16
Japan	160.84	160.84	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
ECU	1.2006	1.20	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78
Switzerland	1.4808	1.48	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68
Netherlands	1.3608	1.36	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16
Denmark	1.3608	1.36	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16
Sweden	1.3608	1.36	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16
Spain	1.3608	1.36	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16
Portugal	1.3608	1.36	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16
Greece	1.3608	1.36	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16
South Africa	1.3608	1.36	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16
Singapore	1.3608	1.36	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16

## OTHER SPOT RATES

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.00	India	1.00
Australia	1.00	Indonesia	1.00
Brazil	1.00	Israel	1.00
Canada	1.00	Italy	1.00
Chile	1.00	Japan	1.00
Colombia	1.00	South Korea	1.00
Czech	1.00	Taiwan	1.00
Danish	1.00	Thailand	1.00
Deutsche	1.00	USA	1.00
DKK	1.00	UK	1.00
EUR	1.00		

## MANAGED BONDS

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.00	India	1.00
Australia	1.00	Indonesia	1.00
Brazil	1.00	Israel	1.00
Canada	1.00	Italy	1.00
Chile	1.00	Japan	1.00
Colombia	1.00	South Korea	1.00
Czech	1.00	Taiwan	1.00
Danish	1.00	Thailand	1.00
Deutsche	1.00	USA	1.00
DKK	1.00	UK	1.00
EUR	1.00		

## COMMODITY & ENERGY

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.00	India	1.00
Australia	1.00	Indonesia	1.00
Brazil	1.00	Israel	1.00
Canada	1.00	Italy	1.00
Chile	1.00	Japan	1.00
Colombia	1.00	South Korea	1.00
Czech	1.00	Taiwan	1.00
Danish	1.00	Thailand	1.00
Deutsche	1.00	USA	1.00
DKK	1.00	UK	1.00
EUR	1.00		

## INTERNATIONAL EQUITY INCOME

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.00	India	1.00
Australia	1.00	Indonesia	1.00
Brazil	1.00	Israel	1.00
Canada	1.00	Italy	1.00
Chile	1.00	Japan	1.00
Colombia	1.00	South Korea	1.00
Czech	1.00	Taiwan	1.00
Danish	1.00	Thailand	1.00
Deutsche	1.00	USA	1.00
DKK	1.00	UK	1.00
EUR	1.00		

## FUND OF FUNDS

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.00	India	1.00
Australia	1.00	Indonesia	1.00
Brazil	1.00	Israel	1.00
Canada	1.00	Italy	1.00
Chile	1.00	Japan	1.00
Colombia	1.00	South Korea	1.00
Czech	1.00	Taiwan	1.00
Danish	1.00	Thailand	1.00
Deutsche	1.00	USA	1.00
DKK	1.00	UK	1.00
EUR	1.00		

## SMALLER COMPANIES

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.00	India	1.00
Australia	1.00	Indonesia	1.00
Brazil	1.00	Israel	1.00
Canada	1.00	Italy	1.00
Chile	1.00	Japan	1.00
Colombia	1.00	South Korea	1.00
Czech	1.00	Taiwan	1.00
Danish	1.00	Thailand	1.00
Deutsche	1.00	USA	1.00
DKK	1.00	UK	1.00
EUR	1.00		

## EUROPE

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.00	India	1.00
Australia	1.00	Indonesia	1.00
Brazil	1.00	Israel	1.00
Canada	1.00	Italy	1.00
Chile	1.00	Japan	1.00
Colombia	1.00	South Korea	1.00
Czech	1.00	Taiwan	1.00
Danish	1.00	Thailand	1.00
Deutsche	1.00	USA	1.00
DKK	1.00	UK	1.00
EUR	1.00		

## FINANCIAL & PROPERTY SHARES

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.00	India	1.00
Australia	1.00	Indonesia	1.00
Brazil	1.00	Israel	1.00
Canada	1.00	Italy	1.00
Chile	1.00	Japan	1.00
Colombia	1.00	South Korea	1.00
Czech	1.00	Taiwan	1.00
Danish	1.00	Thailand	1.00
Deutsche	1.00	USA	1.00
DKK	1.00	UK	1.00
EUR	1.00		

## INTERNATIONAL GROWTH

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.00	India	1.00
Australia	1.00	Indonesia	1.00
Brazil	1.00	Israel	1.00
Canada	1.00	Italy	1.00
Chile	1.00	Japan	1.00
Colombia	1.00	South Korea	1.00
Czech	1.00	Taiwan	1.00
Danish	1.00	Thailand	1.00
Deutsche	1.00	USA	1.00
DKK	1.00	UK	1.00
EUR	1.00		

## UK EQUITY INCOME

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.00	India	1.00
Australia	1.00	Indonesia	1.00
Brazil	1.00	Israel	1.00
Canada	1.00	Italy	1.00
Chile	1.00	Japan	1.00
Colombia	1.00	South Korea	1.00
Czech	1.00	Taiwan	1.00
Danish	1.00	Thailand	1.00
Deutsche	1.00	USA	1.00
DKK	1.00	UK	1.00
EUR	1.00		

## FAIR EAST (EXCLUDING JAPAN)

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.00	India	1.00
Australia	1.00	Indonesia	1.00
Brazil	1.00	Israel	1.00
Canada	1.00	Italy	1.00
Chile	1.00	Japan	1.00
Colombia	1.00	South Korea	1.00
Czech	1.00	Taiwan	1.00
Danish	1.00	Thailand	1.00
Deutsche	1.00	USA	1.00
DKK	1.00	UK	1.00
EUR	1.00		

## AUSTRALIA

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.00	India	1.00
Australia	1.00	Indonesia	1.00
Brazil	1.00	Israel	1.00
Canada	1.00	Italy	1.00
Chile	1.00	Japan	1.00
Colombia	1.00	South Korea	1.00
Czech	1.00	Taiwan	1.00
Danish	1.00	Thailand	1.00
Deutsche	1.00	USA	1.00
DKK	1.00	UK	1.00
EUR	1.00		

## JAPAN

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.00	India	1.00
Australia	1.00	Indonesia	1.00
Brazil	1.00	Israel	1.00
Canada	1.00	Italy	1.00
Chile	1.00	Japan	1.00
Colombia	1.00	South Korea	1.00
Czech	1.00	Taiwan	1.00
Danish	1.00	Thailand	1.00
Deutsche	1.00	USA	1.00
DKK	1.00	UK	1.00
EUR	1.00		

## INTERNATIONAL BALANCE

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.00	India	1.00
Australia	1.00	Indonesia	1.00
Brazil	1.00	Israel	1.00
Canada	1.00	Italy	1.00
Chile	1.00	Japan	1.00
Colombia	1.00	South Korea	1.00
Czech	1.00	Taiwan	1.00
Danish	1.00	Thailand	1.00
Deutsche	1.00	USA	1.00
DKK	1.00	UK	1.00
EUR	1.00		

## SECTOR AVERAGES

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.00	India	1.00
Australia	1.00	Indonesia	1.00
Brazil	1.00	Israel	1.00
Canada	1.00	Italy	1.00
Chile	1.00	Japan	1.00
Colombia	1.00	South Korea	1.00
Czech	1.00	Taiwan	1.00
Danish	1.00	Thailand	1.00
Deutsche	1.00	USA	1.00
DKK	1.00	UK	1.00
EUR	1.00		

## 100 Largest Insurance Funds

Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.00	India	1.00
Australia	1.00	Indonesia	1.00
Brazil	1.00	Israel	1.00
Canada	1.00	Italy	1.00
Chile	1.00	Japan	1.00
Colombia	1.00	South Korea	1.00
Czech	1.00	Taiwan	1.00
Danish	1.00	Thailand	1.00
Deutsche	1.00	USA	1.00
DKK	1.00	UK	1.00
EUR	1.00		













# Robson relishing the Riverside challenge

Gienn Moore meets a former England captain whose style of management is making its mark on the Premiership

Odd, really, that while everyone wondered why on earth Juninho wanted to move to Middlesbrough no one appeared to wonder, 18 months ago, why Bryan Robson was going there. After all, Robson, arguably the best all-round English footballer of his generation, could have waited for any number of Premiership possibilities. The Manchester City job comes up every year while Aston Villa is another regular vacancy.

Now it seems obvious. Robson was off to become Tescote's answer to Kevin Keegan. Middlesbrough's very own Messiah. He would bring world-class footballers to an area previously undisturbed by footballing glory which was still living on the memories of Marnion, Hardwick, Cammell and Clough.

Yet it did not seem like that at the time. Even to Robson. "When I went to see them I was really thinking that I probably would not sign," he said this week. "I was looking for a bigger club than Middlesbrough appeared to be."

"But, after I had seen the situation the chairman [Steve Gibson] talked me into it. I knew there were some decent kids here and he told me how he would support me in the transfer market."

As a North-east lad himself, from County Durham, Robson could imagine the potential. "I knew that, given success, we would get good crowds." So it has proved. Today Middlesbrough's new Celtic Riverside stadium will host its seventh full house in seven Premiership matches when Liverpool are the visitors.

The Robson revolution began across town, at Ayresome Park last August. Robson had brought Clayton Blackmore with him from Old Trafford and spent £2.25m on a goalkeeper, Alan Miller, and two defenders, Neil Cox and Nigel Pearson.

The rebuilt team began with four straight wins before the impetus faltered as Robson, inevitably, spent long periods out of the side. Yet they never slipped below fourth and were third moving into February. Robson then added goals to his solid, but rarely inspiring side.

Uwe Fuchs came on loan from Germany to score nine times in 15 games then Jan Åge Fjørtoft joined for £1.3m. He scored three goals in the last four games as Middlesbrough claimed the only automatic promotion place.

Despite their manager's aura, their chairman's money, and a solid backbone, pre-season forecasts were grim. But, while promotion partners Bolton (19th) and Boro (19th) were fourth, four points off third place.

Their success has even surprised Robson. "I knew we had some decent players, even before we brought in Nick Barmby and Juninho, and I thought we would hold our own. But we started better than I thought we would."

"Mid-table would be a success this season. It would be a good foundation. If we win a Uefa Cup place that would be the icing on the cake. We have a lot of young players. It is a case of them realising the Premier League need hold no fears for them."

"I am enjoying management. It has gone well so far but I have got to keep my feet on the ground. It is a hell of a difference to playing. I miss playing, but not as much as people think. I do enjoy it but it is hard doing both."

"It is very difficult to get enough rest to play in the Premiership. It has helped that the team have played so well, especially Jamie Pollock and Robbie Mustoe in the middle. I have not had to play much."

As he showed in the recent Coca-Cola Cup win over Crystal Palace, when he produced the pass of the night to release Alan Moore to create the opening goal, he still has plenty to offer. There even was a time last year, when Terry Venables was searching for someone to fill the midfield anchor role, that a 91st international cap did not seem fanciful.

Such was Robson's range of talents during his prime that his passing was overshadowed by his thunderous tackling and goal-scoring runs into the box. After beginning at West Bromwich Albion, where he established his long-standing relationship with the treatment room, he spent his career at Manchester United, winning every domestic honour. He also played for England for 12 years.

Yet many people were surprised to discover, when Juninho signed, how venerated Robson was in Brazil. Juninho was clearly impressed by Robson's reputation (and his friendship with Dunga, the Brazilian captain), even if he is not quite as awed as Barmby, Robson's other major signing. The signing encapsulated Robson's "can do" philosophy. "We underestimate ourselves in this country. If you fancy a top player in the world, go out and get him."

It also illustrated another Robson creed, the need to entertain as well as win. "He [Juninho] is a creator, he will excite fans. It is not just about results, fans have got to be entertained. I learned that at West Brom. Whenever I go back there fans talk to me about the team of Cyril Regis and Laurie Cunningham. We played some tremendous football under Ron Atkinson. I want fans to be talking about Juninho and Barmby."

It is an approach followed by both of Robson's main managerial influences, Atkinson and Alex Ferguson. "Alex was very good to me. In the last couple of years he let me go in with the coaches every morning to see what goes on, all the organisation."

Ferguson himself has been impressed with Robson's start. "He has adapted to management well," the Manchester United manager said this week. "It is a very different job to when I started. There are so many pitfalls now. You need a bit of luck and he had that in

going to Middlesbrough at the right time, when there was a chairman who could plough money into it and allow him to buy big. He has been able to buy good players."

"His strengths as a manager are the same as they were as a player. He is single-minded, stubborn even, very determined. He has great concentration and is very thorough. I want to see him before the Coca-Cola Cup game with Crystal Palace and he was in his little room, surrounded by all his data on them."

The sight of the buccannery Robson poring over statistics and scouting reports is hard to envisage. Not that he has changed that much. At Bisham Abbey earlier this month, during an England practice match, a familiar figure sprinted late into the box and rose to meet a cross only to head it wide. Curses filled the autumn air.

The England connection — he is one of Venables' coaches — is an enjoyable one. "It is a bit more relaxing. You want the team to win but the boss picks it and the pressure is on him. It is good to mix with the best footballers and work with people like Terry and Don Howe."

Robson is obviously a candidate to succeed Venables. He is also talked of as a potential successor to Ferguson, the speculation fuelled by Robson's continued residence in Cheshire (he commutes to Middlesbrough by plane).

"I am not looking to move house at the moment because my children are facing an important time for their schooling [they are approaching GCSE exams]. At the moment I am just looking to improve Middlesbrough."

There is a sense that Robson is destined for Old Trafford or Lancaster Gate, but he may be tempted to stay. He admits even he has been surprised at the enthusiasm on Tescote.

"This season has been above expectation. I did not expect to fill 30,000 seats. The players respond to the atmosphere, the fans are right behind the team. We are still growing — 15 months ago we finished ninth in the First Division."



Bryan Robson: making the most of his talents for Middlesbrough and England

Photograph: David Ashdown

## WIN A TVR GRIFFITH 500

with the INDEPENDENT

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INDEPENDENT

TVR Griffith 500

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## Third Division clubs beware: the circus is coming to town

In supporting the team for 20 years from the town which has held such titles as "Murder and Crime per capita Kings of the UK" and "Where Scabs support Stags" (the latter from a Yorkshire Miners Newsletter, circa 1984), a suitable analogy of Mansfield Town's performances is that of a bob-sleigher's profession — "a very fine dividing line between karma and carnage."

In attempting to mix the players of Real Madrid in the Fifties and the Dutch style of the Seventies, over the past 18 months Andy King has introduced a wonderfully cavalier (or in this area maybe that should be a 3.0l Ford Capri) approach to gaining victories.

However, with the usual personnel fatter than Puskas, older looking than Di Stefano, and with Cruyff's Total Football maxim usually being interpreted as "let's change from 4-4-2 to 0-0-10", we witness sharp shooting (12 goals in 24 hours last Christmas; 10 in the last two visits to Wigan) to suicidal defending because of our defence going on Aborigine-type walkabouts. This is not only the capitulations like those recently at Preston and at home to Bury, where ex-play-

### FAN'S EYE VIEW No 125 Mansfield Town GARY JOHN-BAPTISTE

ers, but still heroes, Wilkinson and Stant knocked in a hat-trick and four goals respectively on successive Saturdays, but an unmatched ability to snatch draws from the jaws of victory — against Scarborough in September we took the lead in the second minute of injury time and still didn't win.

The affair with a lesser light is not like a big club manic affliction where supporters call for more revolutions than the average Peruvian freedom fighter, but more of a Liz Taylor/Richard Burton romance where despite the drink, divorce and destruction accounting for 90 per cent of the existence, it's the once-in-a-blue-moon Anthony and Cleopatra spectacle that makes you gloat. "Can you remember when...?"

1) In 1975 when the BBC cameras came to the fiefdom of Field Mill for the one and only time to show the fifth-round FA Cup tie against the then big boys of Carlisle who won, "by the

jammie goal ever in the history of Association Football, which was, by a conservative estimate, 75 yards offside" according to my brother. I, of course, believed him, saw nothing on TV later on to dispute this, and was even more upset when he appeared in the crowd during the highlights.

2) In the 1977-78 season we drew 3-3 with Spurs in the old Second Division on a pitch so bad that it had to be cleared of hippos and rice planters before the match could start (according to my brother again, a player actually drowned in the six-yard box during the game, a claim which has never been proved or refuted).

3) Johnny Miller (ex-Orient and Norwich, not ex-US Ryder Cup) took a penalty which ended with the ball hitting the crossbar and ballooning over the North Stand (for the unaware, a construction comparable with the away end at QPR).

4) May 1987 — Our big day out! Twenty thousand disciples (including my mother and sister, who had never seen them before or since — usually, I don't blame them) throwing about donkey jackets as the mighty yellow machine stuffed Bristol City 4-3 on penalties in the Sherpa Van thingy at Wembley after two hours of probably the most tedious pile of garbage ever played in that stadium.

Personally, forget your Wimbledon and Wycombe. I prefer my team to be a small fish in a small pond, meeting and beating Leeds in the cups and Lincoln (occasionally) in the league. (Europe? Forget it. The closest we came was in being beaten by Workington in a Knockout). My one ambition is for us to play Liverpool away in the FA Cup, go one down and then blitz the Kop in the second half to go 5-1 up with two minutes to go, safe in the knowledge that with an X inscribed on my fixed-odds coupon, we may still scramble a draw before losing honourably in the replay.

Third Division clubs beware: the circus is coming to town. Conjurors or chimpanzees? It's anyone's guess.

### Team news

**Chelsea v Tottenham**  
Gullit's calf muscle injury seems certain to keep him out, while Furlong (knee) has also joined the Chelsea sick list. Spencer, however, has recovered and could now replace Stein up front. Calderwood looks certain to keep his place in Tottenham's defence, with Wilson still struggling with a groin injury.

**Coventry v Wimbledon**  
Taffer is poised to return for struggling Coventry after recovering from an ankle injury and he is likely to replace assistant manager Strachan, who deputised for him. For Wimbledon, skipper Jones returns from a one-match ban, most likely to replace utility player Ellis, with Talbot set to keep his midfield place as Leonard is still not fully recovered from flu. Republic of Ireland defender Cunningham (leg) is doubtful, while new centre-back signing Pearce is set to start against one of his former clubs.

**Everton v Sheffield Wednesday**  
Everton central defender Short is out with a groin strain and is replaced by Hinchcliffe. Otherwise, Everton expect to be unchanged. New signing Nicol, the 24-year-old former Scottish international defender, goes straight into the Wednesday side. Farnham is out after injuring a foot at Arsenal in midweek, but former England defender Walker is confident of returning after flu ruled him out of the last two matches.

**Also added to the squad are Williams and goalkeeper Woods, who returns from a loan spell at Reading.**  
**Sheff Wednesday v Aston Villa**  
City have an unchanged side for the successive match as they attempt to continue their revival. Defender Edgill has recovered from a groin injury sustained in Wednesday's 3-0 victory over Wimbledon, which lifted them off the bottom of the table for the first time this season. Manager Little looks set to keep the side which beat Southampton on Monday as he completes 12 months in charge at Villa. Defender Chiogti makes his 1,000th appearance.

**Middlesbrough v Liverpool**  
Middlesbrough's leading scorer Hignett has failed to recover from an ankle injury in charge at Villa. Defender England Under-21 international midfielder Pollock will play with a protective headband after having 10 stitches inserted in a wound following a clash of heads with Spurs' defender Austin in midweek. Collymore and Ruddock keep their places as Liverpool manager Evans also selects an unchanged team. Ruddock keeps out Scales in defence, while Collymore has another opportunity to impress because of an injury to Rush. Striker Hendrie could win a

place on the bench after a goal in the 4-1 midweek reserve game win over Barnsley.

**Newcastle v Leeds**  
Former England Under-21 midfielder Clark, who has missed three matches with Achilles tendon trouble, is ready to start for Newcastle. Ferdinand, the Premiership's top scorer with 18 goals, has recovered from his ankle injury and Northern Ireland winger Gillespie (foot) is now fit. Bolin, Leeds' new £4.5m signing, has been cleared to make his debut. The Football Association yesterday received the Sweden's international clearance from Italy, so he is included in Howard Wilkinson's squad. Bolin has played just seven competitive games this season and Wilkinson may be tempted to start him on the bench. Pemberton is again out through suspension and Phil Masinga is also unavailable with a groin injury.

**Southampton v Bolton**  
Venison and Bennett face late fitness tests before Southampton name their side. New signing Venison has missed the last two matches with a back injury while winger Bennett sustained a thigh strain after coming on as a substitute in the defeat against Aston Villa. Bolton are hoping to have defender

Stubbs back after missing the last two games with Achilles problems. They will be without injured winger Lee but means Breakwell, sent off against West Ham, will continue in a wide role as his suspension does not start until next weekend.

**West Ham v QPR**  
West Ham manager Rodknap looks prepared to keep Harvey at full-back for a third successive match, which means Breakwell will miss out again. West Ham, with only one defeat in their last seven League games, aim to continue their impressive run by breaking their Upton Park jinx — they have only won one home game this season. Former England striker Hatley is set for his Queen's Park Rangers debut — two months after signing for the London club from Rangers for £2m — after recovering from an ankle operation. Midfielder Holloway is back after suspension, but full-back Bardsley has one game of his three-match ban still to serve.

**TOMORROW**  
**Arsenal v Blackburn**  
Blackburn, hoping to improve their dismal away record, will again be without injured centre-half Pearce but they welcome back Norwegian Bohinen, hero of last week's 7-0 victory over his former club Nottingham Forest. He was ineligible for Wednesday's Champions League match and stands by to be recalled at the expense of Warhurst.

الرياض 1:50



## SPORT

BRYAN ROBSON

Thoroughbred manager 30

JENNY PITMAN

Mercurial trainer

28

## Batty calls in advisers after Blackburn showdown

## Football

GUY HODGSON

David Batty yesterday called in his advisers after a meeting with the Blackburn manager, Ray Harford, to discuss what punishment he should receive for his part in the brawl with Graeme Le Saux during the Champions' League match against Spartak Moscow on Wednesday.

A statement from the club

said that Batty had asked for the weekend to give him the opportunity to consider his position.

Harford spoke to both players yesterday and afterwards confirmed that a suspension was not considered appropriate.

"I spoke to the chairman and we agreed how we would handle it," he said. "I have also spoken to both players and whatever action we take it will not affect their prospects of playing against Arsenal

[tomorrow]. Their future is not in doubt at this club."

The incident happened four minutes into the match when the players collided accidentally. Le Saux erupted in a flurry of punches after allegedly being goaded by Batty and the pair had to be separated.

Harford admitted the clash affected both the team, who lost 3-0, and himself. "I found it difficult to concentrate properly on the game after it happened and it was maybe half-time be-

fore I was able to focus. I have felt worse but I don't know when. It was not a nice for anyone connected with the club and not nice for anyone watching."

Batty refused to talk to reporters when he arrived at Blackburn's Brockhall training ground yesterday, while Le Saux was having an X-ray on his left hand - thought to have been injured in the fracas. The full-back has apologised for the incident, describing himself as "unprofessional".

"The hardest job now is to get back some unity," Harford said. "The team spirit has been terrific here. We won the championship because of it."

Duncan Ferguson was released from Glasgow's Barlinnie Prison in the early hours of yesterday morning after serving 44 days of a three-month sentence. His leaving eclipsed his arrival, the Everton striker departing in a Daimler.

He will be a guest of honour at Everton's home match against

Sheffield Wednesday today and on Monday the club will begin the fight to overturn a 12-match suspension imposed by the Scottish Football Association.

Ferguson, the first professional to be jailed for an on-field assault on a fellow player - in his case, against Raith's John McStay while playing for Rangers in April 1994 - must still serve nine games of his 12-match ban. Everton are being backed, however, by the Professional Footballers' Association in their plea

for a judicial review of the ban. Ferguson's old club, Rangers, are ready to risk the wrath of the SFA over the role of the referee supervisor. They are refusing to commit themselves to attending a disciplinary hearing next Thursday.

Wimbledon are prepared to sell Dean Holdsworth in order to raise cash to buy players. Interested clubs, like Chelsea, should start bidding at £4m.

■ Fifa, football's world governing body, has thrown its weight behind opposition to Jean-Marc Bosman's court victory which threatens the transfer system in Europe. "An international organisation simply cannot operate properly unless regulations are universally applied, and any other approach would lead to serious problems," Fifa said, adding that the independent status of the 16 associations concerned could also be jeopardised.

## Malcolm fires more blanks for England

## Cricket

MARTIN JOHNSON

reports from Bloemfontein  
England 316-8 dec and 121-1  
Orange Free State 245-9 dec

Bloemfontein is just the kind of town where you would expect to find a Last Chance Saloon, but in terms of next week's second Test, Devon Malcolm and John Crawley appear to have walked through the door just in time to see the towels on the pumps and the barman stacking the chairs.

Crawley's classy, unbeaten 69 yesterday has been rendered largely irrelevant by Raymond Illingworth's decision not to tamper with the top six. "It would be unfair to chop and change after just one innings of the series," he said. However, as the chairman unilaterally changed a team after it had been selected on one occasion last summer, perhaps Crawley has not entirely given up hope.

The same cannot be said of Malcolm, who is bowling like a man dispossessed. Illingworth tried his best to be kind yesterday, when he said that Malcolm's "body language was a little bit better", but Raymond's own body language suggested that if he thought Malcolm was just about capable of bowling a hoop downhill, it would have to be a particularly steep gradient.

Malcolm's team-mates also

language involves that familiar falling away in the delivery stride, and an arm too low to extract any genuine bounce. Furthermore, any lingering prospect of a Test place in Johannesburg disappeared when he was spanked around Springbok Park by an 18-year-old schoolboy.

Hendrik Dippenaar, a South African Under-19 tourist to England last summer, attends the same local college that produced Allan Donald, Kepler Wessels and Hansie Cronje, and the fact that this was his first-class debut did not inhibit him from dispatching a Malcolm bounce over square leg for six.

England's best bowler yesterday, if only by a short head from Peter Martin, was Dominic Cork, who managed to find a good deal more pace and bounce than Malcolm. Cork is no economy model, though, and while most people would not have to think too long for an answer if asked whether Cork or Malcolm had conceded more runs per over in Test cricket, most people would get it wrong.

Where Cork does score over bowlers of his relatively modest pace, however, is in aggression. Cronje, the South African captain, is considered to be a bit on the windy side when it comes to the short stuff, and after Cork had persuaded Cronje that the back foot was a safer option than the front one, he plucked out his off stump with a ball of much fuller length.

Up until then, the combination of watching England's bowlers struggle, and the news that Shaun Pollock had taken five wickets for his State side, did not greatly augur well for next week, but the two sessions after lunch were a significant improvement, and Crawley's

increased agility in the field also brought him two fine catches.

Richard Illingworth picked up three late wickets - including Dippenaar's to a thin-edged cut - and although England will undoubtedly be tempted to pick four seamers next week if, as they suspect, the Test pitch turns out to be a little greener and juicier than the last one, Illingworth will probably keep his place in an unchanged side.

The one batsman England did not need to make runs here duly failed to do so, Michael Atherton confirming his reputation of failing to rise to the small occasion with scores of 0 and 13. His hoik to short midwicket yesterday was particularly ghastly, but Crawley and Mark Ramprakash handsomely extended England's first-innings lead of 71.

Interestingly, given that Crawley and Ramprakash are effectively competing for the same Test match batting position on this tour, there were two decidedly hairy run-out calls.

(Second day of three; England won Test)  
ENGLAND: First innings 316 for 8 (18 P  
Thorne 121, J. Smith 110)  
ORANGE FREE STATE: First innings  
245 for 9 (18 P)

England: 1-74, 2-112, 3-122, 4-129, 5-156, 6-176, 7-232, 8-245, 9-245.  
First day: 1-74, 2-112, 3-122, 4-129, 5-156, 6-176, 7-232, 8-245, 9-245.  
England: 1-74, 2-112, 3-122, 4-129, 5-156, 6-176, 7-232, 8-245, 9-245.  
England: 1-74, 2-112, 3-122, 4-129, 5-156, 6-176, 7-232, 8-245, 9-245.

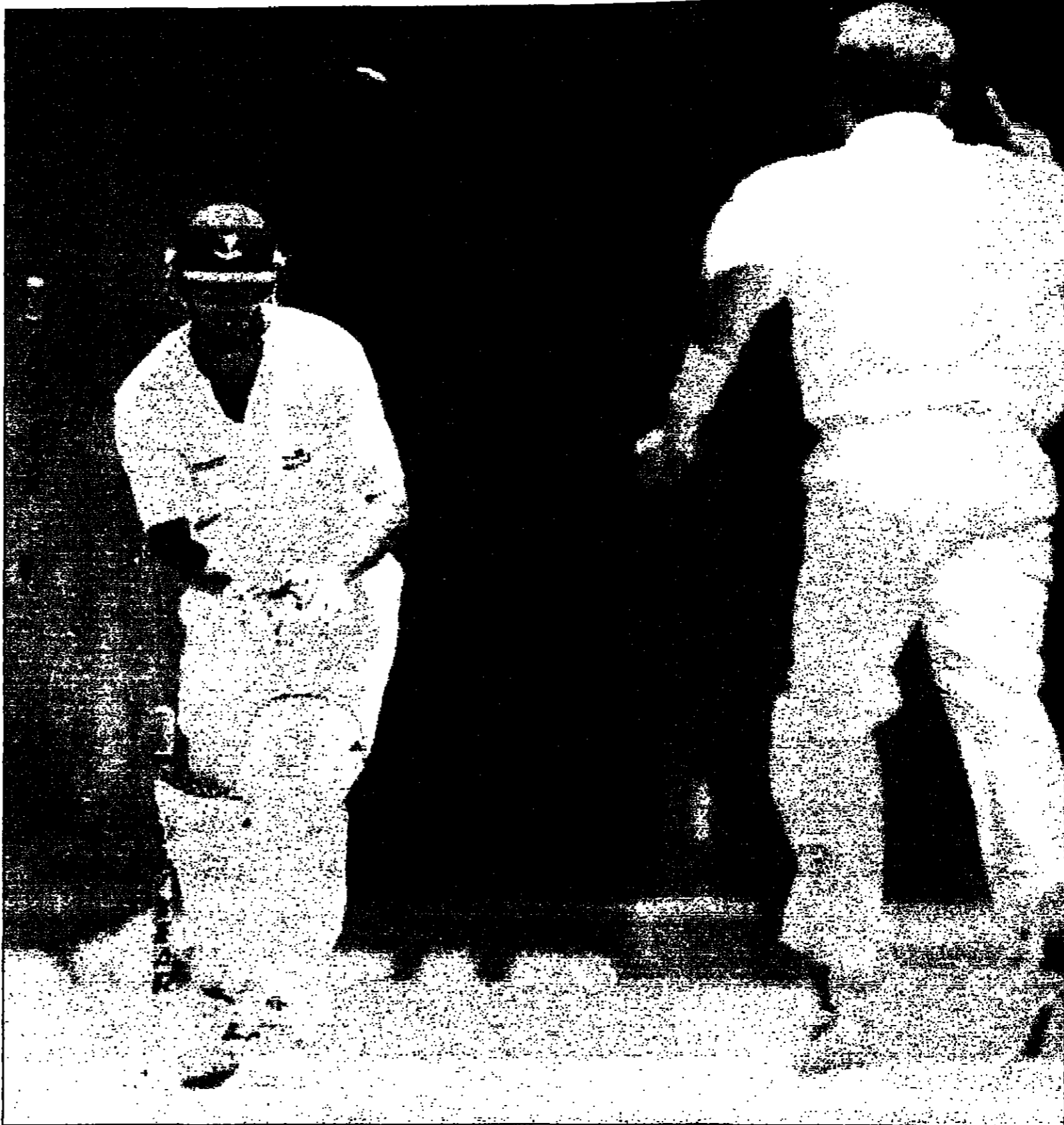
England: 1-74, 2-112, 3-122, 4-129, 5-156, 6-176, 7-232, 8-245, 9-245.

England: 1-74, 2-112, 3-122, 4-129, 5-156, 6-176, 7-232, 8-245, 9-245.

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England: 1-74, 2-112, 3-122, 4-129, 5-156, 6-176, 7-232, 8-245, 9-245.

England: 1-74, 2-112, 3-122, 4-129, 5-156, 6-176, 7-232, 8-245, 9-245.



Hansie Cronje, the South African captain, has his off stump removed by Dominic Cork at Springbok Park yesterday

Photograph: Derek Cox/PA

## Wales start to sing along to England's tune

## Rugby Union

STEVE BALE

English and Welsh officials have reached agreement on dovetailing their domestic seasons and even on a preferred time for the Five Nations' Championship - at the very end of the season - after a highly confidential meeting attended by a handful of influential figures in the game this week.

"We have been singing off the same sheet to a greater degree than the public hitherto be-

lieved," one leading administrator said last night. Thus the Welsh Rugby Union is now in accord with Rugby Football Union proposals contained in the recent RFU commission report for the participation of four English and four Welsh clubs in an expanded European competition next autumn with a parallel Anglo-Welsh championship to include the six remaining English and eight Welsh First Division clubs.

The respective national leagues - in England the Courage Clubs' Championship

and in Wales the successor to the Heineken League if the present sponsors withdraw as expected at the end of this season - would continue over the season. The Welsh appear to have accepted also that to stage the Five Nations during May would maximise its television earning potential.

The financial imperative has become more significant than ever in view of the belligerence of English and Welsh clubs towards their unions. Talks with broadcasters and sponsors have led the clubs to expect they could independently strike

deals worth £110m over three seasons, with clubs each grossing as much as £1m annually.

This appears to be dependent on the establishment of a fully fledged Anglo-Welsh league that would wholly supersede the present separate arrangements in each country as well as the RFU/WRU plans for a sub-European Anglo-Welsh competition that would of necessity exclude the most successful clubs, i.e. those who had qualified for Europe.

Meanwhile the RFU, which has been having its own talks

with broadcasters, anticipates that the vast sums being bandied about would be sustainable only if the package included the Five Nations' Championship.

ITV's three-year investment of up to £30m in the fledgling European Cup, which has begun without English participation, is therefore taken at Twickenham to be a down-payment before the next Five Nations contract comes up for negotiation next year and there is no interest in the rights to domestic rugby alone.

Vernon Pugh, the WRU chairman, reported the conclusions of this week's meeting to his union's general committee on Thursday. So far there has been no equivalent report-back in England but as the "agreement" would seem to satisfy the RFU commission's requirements in almost every particular it is inconceivable there could be any credible objection.

That will not be the end of the matter. England and Wales together may now form an unlikely alliance among the Five Nations, but the Scots and Irish still need to be persuaded and the French have for years objected to any attempt to encroach on the climax of their club championship in May and June.

Then there is the sticking-point between the unions and the Anglo-Welsh clubs. The formation of a united front between Twickenham and Cardiff Arms Park is a necessary defence against the hostility of clubs who have so far had a dusty response to their demand for all the proceeds of European and cross-border rugby.

Last night there was yet another meeting of the main Anglo-Welsh club representatives, and today WRU officials are to meet their First Division clubs. On both sides of Offa's Dyke the clubs have formed themselves into limited companies and are being advised by leading marketing firms in what may end up as two unilateral declarations of independence if the most lurid prognostications become reality.

Gallagher in the crossfire, page 27

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## HAVE YOU GOT WHAT IT TAKES?

THINK ( ) CHOIR  
AMPLE ( ) REVEL  
GRAND ( ) DROLL  
PIVOT ( ) VAGUE  
SPACE ( ) BLESS  
EAGER ( ) HOVEL  
LOCAL ( ) MANOR



Place a letter between the words which, when substituted for the middle letter of each word either side, will create two other words. When all the letters have been found a word can be read downwards. What is the word?

Get the answer right and we will send you a Certificate of Merit.

The answer is \_\_\_\_\_  
If you can solve this puzzle you could be eligible to join Mensa the high IQ society.  
Cut the coupon for further details and a copy of the self-administered test.  
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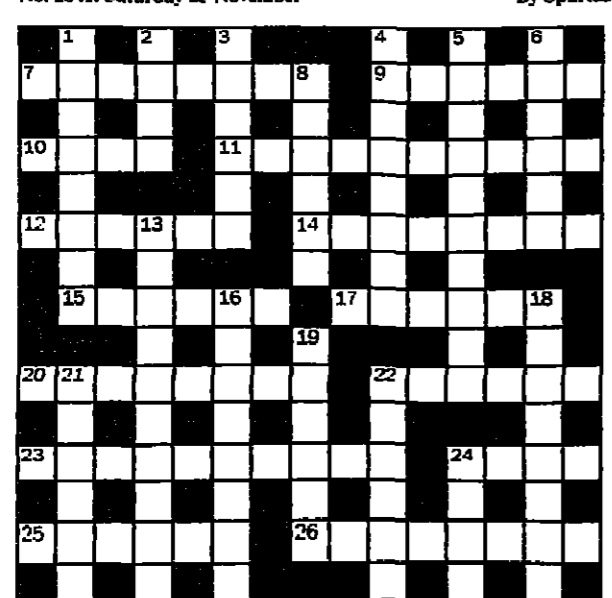
**Mensa**

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ARTS & B  
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BOOKS  
CHRISTMAS  
SPECIAL

## THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 2841, Saturday 25 November

By Spurlins



The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hand-picked copies of the excellent Chambers Biographical Dictionary, worth £35. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5LW. Please use the box number and postcode. Last week's winners were: Mr A R Trowell, Wokingham; MS Young, West Sussex; Miss W McKinnon, Glasgow; SW Johnson, Leicester; Michael Weallens, Penwortham, Preston.

## ACROSS

- 7 Magazine taken by two doctors - The Hobbit (8)
- 9 Spherical bag, thrown high, caught by girl (6)
- 10 Senior chairman, one immersed in study (4)
- 11 Used witicism the wrong way, defendant accepts (10)
- 12 Pop a question not entirely impervious to sense? (6)
- 14 Lift to reveal solution (8)
- 15 Northern hillside over in outskirts of Newry? (8)
- 16 Not far off (6)
- 17 Reason pupil's inserted a few words (6)
- 20 Expresses criticism of wine containers used by pub (8)
- 22 Simple calculator for keeping an account in a business (6)
- 23 One gainful employment to produce from Africa - sort of peasant (6, 4)
- 24 Do office work - it offers variety (4)
- 25 Erica's left to consume toast (6)
- 26 Pay grannies to work? (8)

## Friday's solution

SEER BARCODES  
I A C L L O I H  
TURNING A S U N C E  
U L T I M A T E  
A S Y M P T O T E A R I A  
I A U N N  
E M P E R O R T I D I E S  
D R I T R S T  
P O U N D S P O O T S I E  
T I C E O B  
R O A D C E L E B R A T E  
S T O U G E P Y  
C R Y S T A L L O G R A P H Y  
A P E A T S A P  
T R E A S U R E C L I D E

## DOWN

- 1 Course cloth one humps around (8)
- 2 Vegetation growing beneath iron ships (4)
- 3 Palaeolithic era discovered in the nineties? (3, 3)
- 4 Two explosive devices to be dismantled before soldiers can enter? (8)
- 5 Sort of tour a carol singer's made (10)
- 6 Look over half-finished lavatories in pavilion (6)
- 8 High level of sound emitted by bat? (6)
- 13 Enclosed square found in Exeter or Lincoln, typically (10)
- 16 Current support for footballer - he'll make a complaint (8)
- 18 Retinue mostly keen to catch joke (8)
- 19 Landed with spots, painful, with tops coming off (6)
- 21 Judgement on university people about to be overturned (6)
- 22 Appeal from everybody over Yorkshire Water (6)
- 24 Body of troops one league behind (4)

## Last Saturday's solution

POSTAL MESSRS  
A S P D Y P P  
B E N E D I C T  
A R M S C E O  
B L O O D T H U N D E R  
L L O E G  
U L T I M A T E  
E T Y V  
A N D E S I N T E G R A L  
S T C E L R  
P E R P E T U A T I O N  
M H R S L O P E  
A C T I O N M I N U T A E  
L N L N L E D  
T R O W E L A G R E E D

Independent

## MAESTRO

Don't be fooled by the smooth exterior. Sir Georg Solti is still the man they call the Screaming Skull

page 3

Photograph: Decca - Terry O'Neill

## INSIDE STORIES

In broadcasting, a single complaint can be devastating. Terry Christian was removed from Talk Radio UK because of a complaint from one listener (though at the time it was unkindly suggested this represented three quarters of his audience; the other listener was a half-wit)

Scrooge would be happiest spending Christmas in a country that is Islamic, Marxist or both. Libya is ideal. Cuba used to be second best, but Castro's reforms mean kitsch nativity scenes are on sale for the first time since he abolished Christmas 30 years ago

Whenever I kill a rat, I leave it out in a field, knowing that it will be gone by morning. If we want to dispose of meat that has gone off, it too goes out, and vanishes. From the faultless efficiency of the scavenger service, it is clear that sweepers come past every night

The Taklamakan desert in China is one of the last unexplored places on earth. Its name means 'once entered you never come out'; the locals call it the 'Desert of Death'. 'My wife felt very strongly that I wouldn't come back,' says the explorer Charles Blackmore

## ARTS &amp; BOOKS

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REVIEWS 6-7  
BOOKS  
CHRISTMAS  
SPECIAL 8-11

## ESCAPES

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PROPERTY 13  
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There was a minor flurry of moral consternation a week or two ago, when a computer game company launched its new advertising campaign. "Go to Hell," read the poster's fiery letters, "You Deserve It."

One of those was tactlessly put up opposite a Bolton church, the vicar of which took a dim view of this infringement of his ecclesiastical franchise. The objection. I take it, was to the frivolity of the message, the implicit indifference to that infernal allusion. Or perhaps it was simple embarrassment at a notion which the Church of England doesn't like to talk about much these days.

As it turned out, it's been a good month for Hell all round, though its recent ubiquity raises some interesting questions about our current moral vocabulary —

Hell occurs in three headlines: 'Hell is around the corner'... 'My booze hell'... and 'her TV sitcom hell'. It's been a good month for Hell all round. But for all sorts of reasons, Hell is not the place it was

the difficulty we now have in talking about extremes of good and evil.

The end of the Rosemary West trial, for example, provided the occasion for a rather old-fashioned deployment of the word, used to suggest an ultimate of perdition and punishment. Writing in the *Daily Mail*, Colin Wilson concluded that West was "guilty as hell — which is where she surely belongs". While the *Sun* splashed on its front page with the headline "Burn In Hell".

The *Sun* went to town with infernal references, with a feature inside called "Rose's Ride Into Hell", and a leader-page cartoon which showed the Devil sending a junior demon to tell Frederick West that his wife would be delayed in joining him. But it wasn't just the tabloids who resorted to satanic curses. The *Daily*

**Tom**

*Telegraph's* report included the headline "Vision of hell was laid bare by survivors", and this newspaper described the West's marriage as being "made in hell".

I don't imagine that any of the writers responsible for these lines really believe that there is such a place — the Tory right-winger's dream of the ultimate punitive sentence, an infinite sharp shock. They were just groping for a means to express the outer limits of human wickedness. But in doing so, they kept coming up against the depleted nature of the word, and not just because it is already a journalistic cliché. For all sorts of reasons, Hell is not the place it was.

You can get a sense of its broad decay as a threat by

looking at the most recent edition of *The Face* magazine, as good a register as any of the current or coming culture. Hell occurs in no less than three headlines: "Hell is around the corner", for an article about the increasing vogue for heroin; "My booze hell", for a light-hearted article about female drinking; and then a strapline about an actress escaping from "her TV sitcom hell".

In the first, the word has a serious, admonitory force — they mean Hell is hell. In the second, the reference is jocular, an ironic reference to tabloid style which has a give-me-a-break insouciance. In the third, it carries barely any weight at all — "hell" is just a pain in the butt, and not for eternity either.

It may be that Hell has been afflicted by the inverted moral language of youth culture, in which "wicked" and "bad" carry an opposite sense to their conventional meaning. These forms began with jazz music (the earliest instance of "bad" in an approving sense in the *OED* is from 1928), but they've attained much wider meaning recently, and in doing so they have, however slightly, blurred our ability to talk about ethics. If a judge were to describe the actions of a young ram-raider as "totally wicked", he would probably get a smirk of surprised approval from the dock.

And even Hell shows signs of straying across the formerly clear border between bad and good. Another recent advert, for a new type of rum, carries the slogan "Distilled in Hell" against a

background of leaping flames. This seems to me to be at odds with existing idiom, as seen in the "from Hell" construction, which can be attached to virtually any person (nanny, lodger, mother-in-law) and which usually indicates disgust and contempt. If somebody said to me that they had just drunk the rum from Hell, it would summon up a picture of a retching figure trying to get the taste out of his mouth.

The advertisers presumably hope to appeal to an "I can take it" bravado in its consumers: perhaps their target market is the sort of people who eat vindaloes in order to demonstrate their masculine superiority to pain. But they also inadvertently show how tepid the idea of eternal damnation has become. If Hell is cool, why should anyone worry about going there?

## The people's guide to the Turner Prize

It may be accused of being elitist and unrepresentative, but the Turner Prize, to be awarded on Tuesday, makes contemporary art a hot public debate once a year. So what did the public make of this year's contenders? Adrian Turpin canvassed opinion about Damien Hirst's 'Smartie' paintings and pickled cows, Mona Hatoum's cage installation, and film of her innards, Callum Innes's paint-stripped abstracts and Mark Wallinger's horse-racing films and paintings



'Mother and Child, Divided', by Damien Hirst

Photograph: Nicholas Turpin

"Mona Hatoum's wire-mesh cage is very, very clever. If you look directly at it, there's just a bulb swaying slightly between the cages. But if you're standing up talking to people, you feel they are moving up and down because the shadows keep coming up and down as the bulb moves. I don't think much of the video of the inside of her body, but the crowds are very interested in it. There's often a massive queue to go in there, just as much as to walk through Damien Hirst's cow. I think she stands a very good chance of upsetting the apple-cart and winning."

— John Kirk, 50, Tate gallery supervisor

"I've admired Damien Hirst for a long time, but I'd like Mark Wallinger to win. The Turner prize has become something of a statement for this country to make, so I think that someone who is engaging with British politics and commenting on British life needs to be brought to light. Wallinger has the bizarre Royal Family tradition of parading around Ascot up there on four TV screens and is actually getting people to think about it."

— Clare Cowie, 23, student

"Who do I want to win? I don't think I can differentiate between any of them. I just find myself quite confused about the whole thing. I

go to art exhibitions a lot, but this didn't touch me at all. I really couldn't pick a winner, I feel so numb. What will stick in my mind is the feeling of wanting to be sick with the cow, and not being able to walk through the middle of it."

— Sarah Greene, 27, social worker

"It's probably my age, but I'd rather see live cows in the countryside than dead ones here. Like the film of the woman's insides, the cows are interesting but they don't seem to me to be art. It's the same with the man on the explanatory video at the beginning [Damien Hirst] with the spinning discs that hurt paint. It's great, but he's got children doing it. The children's paintings look just as good as his. It's fun and I'd love to have a go at it. But with art you expect to think 'Gosh, I couldn't do that'. With the spinning discs, I think I probably could."

— Valerie Dickinson, 52, primary school classroom assistant

"I love the simple approach the four exhibitors have taken. They're all dramatic. I particularly like Mona Hatoum's locker-room cages. The way that she's put them together and the illuminations on the wall are fantastic. I like the fact people have to walk around the outside of them. For me, the whole point is that you'd like to be inside them but you're

not allowed to be. It's interesting also that her little video capsule allows you to go in, but a lot of people just stand outside and watch the film of her insides. And it would be wonderful to come here alone and just sit inside those cages contemplating who you are."

— Zak Cook, 23, management consultant

"Mark Wallinger's four videos of Royal Ascot shown together but taken in different years was very funny, because it's clearly the same every year. Maybe it's a one-gate idea, but I'd never thought of it. I've watched events like the Cup Final at Wembley several times, and I suppose if you analysed them too, you'd find the same thing year after year."

— David Galinsky, health and safety advisor 32

"Going round the Turner Prize exhibition is a little like being shouted at. Wallinger's Ascot video and Hatoum's nether regions and, of course, the cows, demand attention. But they demand it in the same way small children do: never mind the sense, who can talk loud-cats? So I think you have to respect, and perhaps even feel a bit sorry for, Callum Innes. You could say his paintings are conceptual art like the others — the way he covers the canvases with paint, then removes it

with white spirit. But he seems to have more technical accomplishment than some of the others."

— Giles Reid, 29, publisher

"Having seen endoscopy in the flesh, Mona Hatoum's video of her insides is disappointing. The image recreation isn't as good as you can get. The noises are excellent, though. Very frightening. It's very invasive because you see the camera going right from the outside of the skin, which is something that as a doctor you never normally would. I think Damien Hirst should win. They look really beautiful."

— Helen Holt, 24, doctor

"Mona Hatoum's wire baskets are lovely, but you can find that kind of effect in everyday life — light coming through the window, the sun moving around. You don't have to be in an art gallery. From

a painterly point of view, I'd like Innes to win. The colours are so fresh, and they really make people look closely. But perhaps that's just me being a bit of a traditionalist."

— David Glover, 46, designer

I'm probably horribly old-fashioned, but I like the very delicate paintings by Callum Innes. That's who I'd award the prize to. There is a serenity about them, which there certainly isn't in a lot of the other things. The dead cows didn't hold any horror for me because of my farming background. What struck me was that, in a piece called *Mother and Child*, the cow hadn't actually got any udders. I don't know if that's just because you can't preserve that very well."

— Christine Ward, 52, teacher

To 3 Dec, at the Tate Gallery, Millbank, London SW1

### What the critics say

"It has to be Damien Hirst. No one else is in the same league. He is not showing his best work this year, but he has completely changed the face of art in Britain. He has the same initials as David Hockney and his influence has been just as great." Andrew Graham-Dixon, *Independent*

"I don't care tuppence about the Turner Prize. The only one of them who is really an artist is Callum Innes, and I hope he gets a little bit more than tuppence for his work." Tim Hilton, *Independent on Sunday*

"I'd like to see the earthy and poetic minimalism of Callum Innes win. His paintings are simply very beautiful. Damien Hirst should have won two years ago, but they missed the boat." John McEwen, *Sunday Telegraph*

"Damien Hirst. Because if a prize like the Turner is to retain its credibility, it should go to the one of the four who has made the biggest splash. Personally, I would have no objection to Callum Innes winning. His painting looked much better at the Tate than at the Jerwood Prize, and he'd be the first painter to win for 10 years, which would be no bad thing." William Packer, *Financial Times*

"I've a suspicion Mona Hatoum may sneak it, but Damien Hirst ought to win. I see him as the heir to Francis Bacon. Both artists share that very British obsession with insalubrious events that take place behind closed doors. He throws open a window on a festering bottled-up world." James Hall, *Guardian*

### six of the best buys this weekend



#### SIX GOOD VIDEOS

1. Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (PG; Touchstone; £14.99) Extraordinarily imaginative, animated scary-tale.
2. *The Madness of King George* (PG; Columbia/TriStar; rental) Alan Bennett and Nigel Hawthorne re-unite for Nicholas Hytner's sparkling film version of Bennett's hit play.
3. *Fox and His Friends* (18; Connoisseur Video; £15.99) One of Fassbinder's few overtly gay films.
4. *Eastwick* (18; Artificial Eye; rental) The lives of a few lonely Canadian souls intertwine in Atom Egoyan's dark thriller.
5. *Prince of Juddland* (15; Arrow; rental) Gabriel Byrne's stripped-down *Hamlet* based on the original folk tale. Flawed but intriguing.
6. *Killer* (18; First Independent; rental) Haunting chamber piece with Anthony LaPaglia sent to kill a willing Mimi Rogers.



#### SIX GOOD CLASSICAL CDS

1. *Kronos: Released/Unreleased* (Nonesuch) An eclectic two-disc set of everything from Barber's *Adagio* to Scott's *Dinner Music* for a *Pack of Hungry Cannibals*. Be bold.
2. *Haydn Symphonies 22, 86, 102* (EMI) Simon Rattle mixes period technique with luxurious modern sound to glowing effect.
3. *Michael Tippett: The Midsummer Marriage* (Lyrita) His first and finest opera now available with the original glowing cast.
4. *Sibelius: Symphonies 2 & 6* (RCA) Another winner in Colin Davis's second. Unmissable and rewarding Sibelius cycle.
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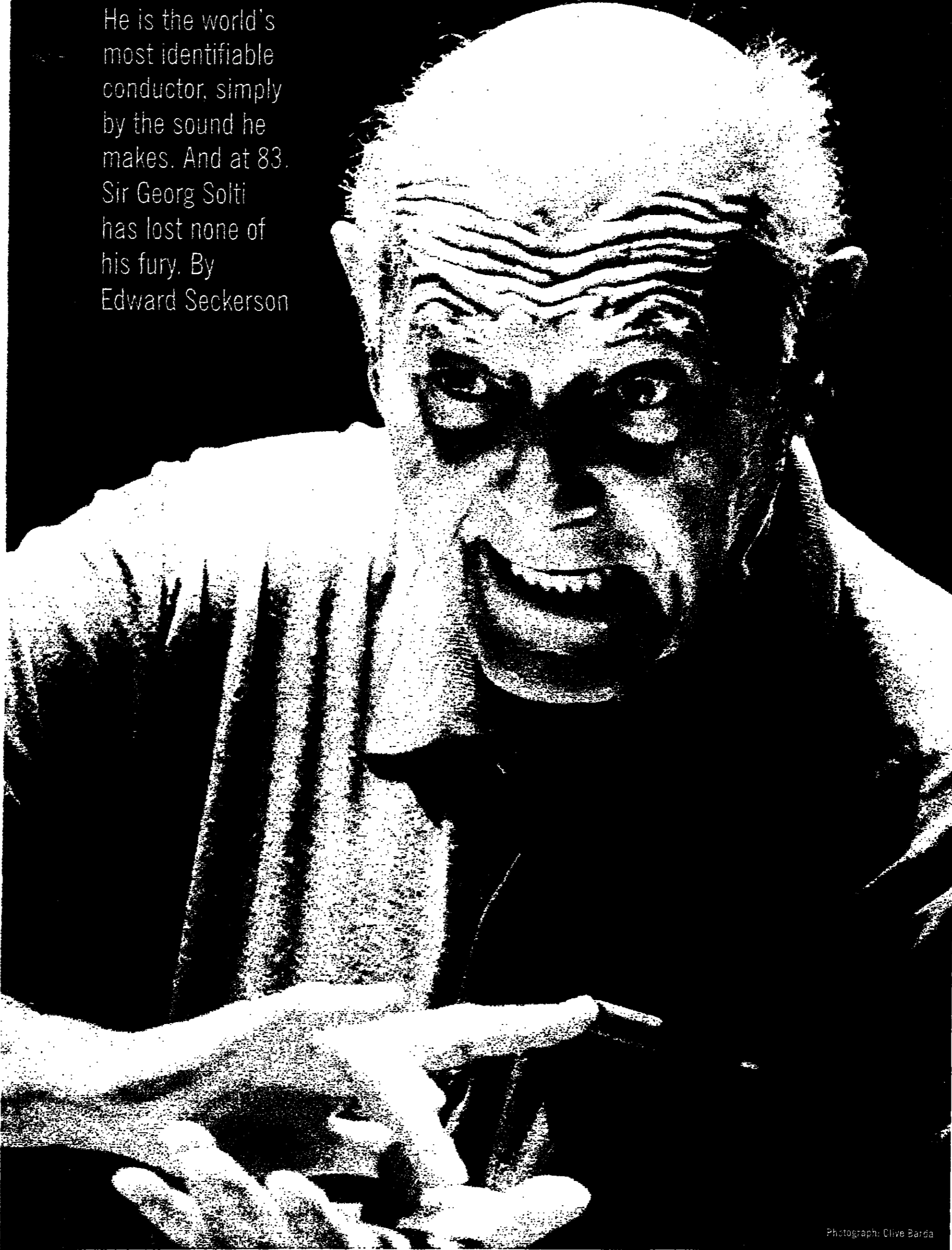
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# Attack! Attack!

He is the world's most identifiable conductor, simply by the sound he makes. And at 83, Sir Georg Solti has lost none of his fury. By Edward Seckerson



**T**he music is familiar – your favourite Brahms symphony, perhaps. You've no idea who's conducting, but the style is indomitable: precisionised, highly articulate, incisive, decisive; athletic strings, lean, hungry brass cleaving through superb textures. It's too recent to be a Toscanini recording, though the manner of the delivery might suggest a kindred spirit. Who then? You don't have to be a musicologist to hazard a guess. No living conductor is more instantly identifiable from the sound he makes.

ask Sir George Solti about that sound, ask him about his musical priorities, and the words come back at you like ack-ack fire: "*Rhythm... rhythm... rhythm...*" To hear him speak is to understand the source of that rhythm. Why, even the thick, heavily accented (in every sense of the word) short-hand English seems expressly designed to strip away superfluties. He speaks as he conducts, he conducts as he speaks — emphatically, explosively. But with that comes a certain reluctance to yield. He has been described as displaying a constitutional resistance to *legato* — to long, shapely, embraceable lines.

You hear what you see. Almost as distinctive as the intimidating bald head (or "screaming skull", as less appreciative of his orchestral personnel once dubbed it) is his strenuous beat, or the "Solti nudge", as it's become known. The phrase "all power to his elbow" might have been coined especially for him. And yet this ferocious, highly motivated energy *is* infectious, and there can be no doubt as to the man's unbending dedication. Even those who love to hate him *respect* him. "I can only do music one way," he says. "My way. Take it or leave it."

The public at large, by and large, have taken it. His career has been one long ascent. He is a particularly fine specimen — perhaps the last — of that dying breed called *Maestro* (note the upper-case "M"). You wouldn't dream of calling him anything else. The Hungarian-born *Maestro* is 83 now, and no one's counting. Fit and active, a full diary into the millennium — he'd not have it any other way. He is perennially rechargeable.

The parallel with Toscanini is an interesting one, stylistically and historically. In 1935, aged 23, Soli went to Salzburg, where a timely flu epidemic landed him a job as répétiteur on the legendary Italian conductor's *Magic Flute*. "I can do that," he thought to himself. "I can follow anyone's beat – perhaps even yours!" At the end of the first rehearsal, the great man threw him an appreciative "Bene". One word, but inasmuch as one word almost constitutes a conversation, he was on speaking terms with Toscanini.

At that time, of course, the twin polarities of the conductor's art were very much exemplified in the personages of Toscanini and Furtwängler – the undisputed superstars and arch-rivals of the day. For the young Solti, Toscanini's fire, his ruthless, cut-and-dried precision, was most appealing "Architecture, architecture... very strict, formal..." Not an ounce of spare flesh anywhere. That's the way he wanted to make music. And would. Furtwängler was, by contrast, the freest of spirits, wayward, even wilful for those, like Solti, who at the time failed to appreciate that this "freedom" of his was organic.

Solti was singularly unimpressed by a Furtwängler performance of Beethoven's Ninth he heard at the 1937 Salzburg Festival. But later, after the war, when he took over the Munich Opera, he heard Furtwängler conduct Tchaikovsky's *Patriotique* symphony, and his ears were opened. "It was ready for him. I understood now this 'inner freedom.' That was a revelation to me... From then on, I suppose I myself was looking for a kind of synthesis of the Toscanini and Furtwängler styles – but with a third element, I hope: ME!" With the emphasis on the "me."

It is ironic that Solli should have seen the light over Furtwängler at a time when he had every reason to despise him. As a Jew, it must have been hard for him to separate Furtwängler, the musician, from Furtwängler, the man who played straight into the hands of Nazi dictators. Or was it? "I am quite sure Furtwängler did not realise the full extent, the full horror, of what was happening. He was a musician before all else, and every time he tried to break away, Goebbels would raise up the threat of Karajan, and he would come back. He was a weak man. He was not political at all."

Unlike Solz: Art and politics aren't just inseparable to him, they're interchangeable. Don't get him started on the issues of the day (at least, not when you've only a precious 30 to 40 minutes of allotted interview time). And if you do, don't expect diplomacy. "What in God's name do the French think they are playing at with this nuclear testing thing... You know what it is - *nationalism, nationalism...* Why are we so afraid of European unity? I'm off to Paris tomorrow, they'll probably throw me out, but I DON'T CARE..."

"Look, my dear"—and there's a sudden switch from here from polemic to fatherly advice—"politics form your life, and if you don't take care, they will form you... You must speak out. It was bad enough in my youth in Hungary that we shut up. No more... NO MORE," he repeats, just as the cup I missed it the first time. The old fires still burn with a zeal and, yes, a charm that is irresistible. The bark is worse than the bite. Though if you do plan to broach the subject of period instruments (try him on "authentic" Bertozz), it's probably just as well to take cover.

But the music-making show any signs of mellowing? Have his priorities shifted at all? That's for others to say," he insists, knowing full well, I suspect, what the response would be. "All I know is that I continue to follow my heart." And changes of heart are all part of that process. Sitting at home in St John's Wood, the maestro shows me his newest scores, custom-made in a particularly enlarged format. "My eyesight is not so good now, and I cannot wear spectacles when conducting... Please, look, see, brand-new, not marking on them. Each one is like a new becoming for me. Everything I do now – and some – I have not touched for 10 years or more – in fact, I re-study. This summer *Die Meistersinger* was a great joy for me. Just to take a new score and sit at the piano from scratch. Just to discover this wonderful piece from the first major chord onwards...

To begin again. Sir George's secret, the secret of his eternal youthfulness. Can it really be that simple? He makes his way over to the piano. He has something to say, only he can play it more eloquently than he can say it. And he plays it with feeling — a short, benevolent motif associated in the opera with the character of the gold-miner Pognier. His whole countenance softens. One day, about three years ago, I heard this moment on the radio, and it brought tears to my eyes. And suddenly I knew that *Meisterstringer* must be a Wagner *Così fan tutte*. I never liked old recording — too heavy, too bombastic,

and the cast was not right... I knew that in Chicago, with my orchestra, who understand me, who know me and trust me, that I could achieve a

chamber music Wagner. No fights, they would just do for me what I wanted." *Is he difficult to please?* "Ja-ee." – and the long "A" says it all. "Because I like good music. Either good or nothing. I know what I want. And I know what is wrong *immediately*. In recording, of course, this is not just helpful, it is essential..."

It was, of course, through recording that the world came to know and admire Solti. You could go so far as to say that he was the record industry's first classical superstar, winner of more Grammy awards (31 in all) than any other recording artist – more than Frank Sinatra, more than Madonna. He made his first record for Decca in 1947 (a Haydn symphony with the London Philharmonic) and fully intends to celebrate his golden anniversary with them in 1997.

Solti is characteristically unsentimental in recalling its long and arduous gestation. He and the Vienna Philharmonic had their differences. "They hated me at the time. Because I was critic, and they were not used to that. They loved to play in this schmoozy Viennese way – very beautiful, what a sound – but there was this young man insisting, insisting all the time... rhythm, articulation, *attack*. It took years, but they came to respect me for my conviction. But you know, a good orchestra will always give a conductor what he wants... Actually, the Vienna Philharmonic came to like my way." *My way*. Will that be Solti's epitaph? The political incorrectness of it is as refreshing as it is breathtaking. Solti says what other conductors only think.

But then, how many other conductors began

Together, he and the Decca producer John Culshaw and his team were a revolution. Together, they changed the way opera was heard on record. He remembers Culshaw coming to him with the EMI/Furtwängler recording of *Tristan und Isolde* and saying, "Listen, the voices are far too dominant, we have to bring the orchestra more into the picture." And they did. Rather too enthusiastically at first, Solti believes: "Even Birgit Nilsson was fighting to be heard... and if you couldn't hear her, you couldn't hear anybody!" Even so, their realisation of Wagner's *Ring*—the first in a series of recordings of it (beginning astonishingly, in

meeting. Bartok declined the offer ("Of course he did. It was a stupid schoolboy thing to do!"), suggesting instead a Debussy Prelude. There fol-

lowed Bach, lots of Bach, which Bartok loved ("Naturally—counterpoint is the major element in his music") and Scarlatti and Mozart, Schumann rather than Schubert, and Liszt rather than Chopin ("Not really his kind of romanticism").

"Sometimes he played—he was a wonderful pianist—I remember his old-fashioned high-finger position. But mostly he just listened, and asked us to listen—to him, but most of all to ourselves. He spoke very little, and you wouldn't believe that a man who was such a volcano in his music spoke so quietly. He had unforgettable big eyes which looked at one in the most piercing way. There was a sadness in them, in him. He came into this world and far too quickly disappeared from it, leaving very little personal memory—very few letters—a sort of

Blazing a trail of masterpieces. A mighty handful of them feature this week in Solti's three-concert tribute to his compatriot and teacher on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his death. Solti and Bartok – as ever, it's a highly combustible prospect. Almost as combustible as the music itself: a kind of Molotov cocktail of the classical and the primitive. Solti's choice of works (and it's a personal one) leads with the *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta* – in his opinion, Bartok's greatest orchestral piece (the piece that every spooky movie score loves

## TELEVISION

## Dressing for Breakfast (C4)

The sitcom discovers 'Cosmo'-style female smut. By Jasper Rees

While Channel 4 is a frenetic importer of reliable American comedy, efforts to design home-grown models have been mixed. *Drop the Dead Donkey* was an unalloyed triumph, but *Paris* and *Father Ted*, two cheerful celebrations of stereotype, missed more frequently than they hit. It's never fair to judge a sitcom on its first outing, because introductions are always awkward when one of those shaking hands is so eager to impress. The best you can usually say of any new sitcom is "nice to meet you".

You can say it of *Dressing for Breakfast*, that rare sitcom on a mission to redraw the boundaries that mark out what you can laugh at. This agenda sounds grander than it is, as it's actually no more than a girlie version of *Men Behaving Badly*, another comedy that's frank about sexual motive. But where women are concerned these are uncharted waters – or they are in television comedy. The crocheted-your-own-orgasm ethic has kept *Cosmopolitan* in business for years, whereas female smut is as new to sitcom as its male equivalent is old.

The freshness of *Dressing for Breakfast* combines nicely with a vague whiff of threat. You'd never find Martin Clunes seeing the funny side of vaginal cystitis, or even knowing that there's an unfunny side. In episode one there was a witty and unprecedentedly detailed sequence of gags about oral sex, which ordinary male viewers might find too belittling to laugh at in comfort. It takes a woman scriptwriter, and preferably one, like Stephanie Colman, without previous sitcom experience, to get a shower of cunnilingus jokes past the blue pencil.

The credit sequence depicts our two girls slandering over gorgeous males who turn out, for whatever reason, to be unavailable. Like the dumb-show in *Hankel*, the gist of the show is miffily established before a word has been spoken: girls gagging for it. These aren't a novelty on television: in fiction there's Pauline Calf, played by a man; in reality there's Margi Clarke, who merely looks like one. Beattie Edney's Louise is more believable than either. That's not to say that she actually is believable: though she's often found in rather stern or stinging roles, a casting agent could easily have come up with someone less patently attractive.

The strength of the series is likely to rest on Louise's relationship, not with her best pal Carla, sassy played by Holly Aird, but with her mother Liz. Calman has taken the *AbFab* template of the nagging, faddish mother and buffed her up into a sexual success story. Charlotte Cornwell as Liz hogs the best lines, and they're all aimed at her daughter: "You're feeling very unheard at the moment." Or, "Have you thought of doing one of Holly's anger workshops?"

There's also some pretty low stuff. Last night Louise was paired with a finely drawn gargoyle from America, and Liz, off on honeymoon, gives him her daughter's number "should anything arise". But the joke is only inserted so the script can then sneer at it. In *Rude Foodspeak*, this is known as smearing your cake all over succulent flesh and lingeringly licking it up.

## OPERA 'Falstaff', Mayfair Suite, Birmingham

City of Birmingham Touring Opera delight with a welcome revival of Verdi's masterpiece. By Jan Smaczny



Nuala Willis as Mistress Quickly and Keith Latham as Falstaff: two members of a magnificent cast

Photograph: Richard H Smith

City of Birmingham Touring Opera's revival of *Falstaff* provides a welcome opportunity to see how far this still relatively young company has come in eight years, both artistically and physically. Graham Vick's founding production was a brave start. Opera that takes performers to the limits of wit and subtlety is daring, and this *Falstaff* worked, on the whole, very successfully. In eight years, CBTO has developed extraordinary artistic confidence over a handful of remarkable productions. The company also seems happily settled into the Mayfair Suite in the heart of the city. When CBTO arrived here with *Les Boréades* three years ago, their surroundings were dismal and the acoustics unhelpful; now, the rougher aspects of the Suite have been cheerfully domesticated and it works well both visually and acoustically.

Best of all is the completeness of this project. Every aspect of *Falstaff* has been integrated, skilfully harnessing the abundant humour in Verdi's masterpiece. No detail is overlooked. Graham Vick's revived production flows as deftly as the score itself, with each move almost choreographically linked to the music. Paul Brown's set, a precipitous rake with trap-doors, has endless potential for humour, as do the costumes – from blowsy matrons to the Breughel peasant outfits worn by Bardolph and Pistol. Here was an apotheosis of the codpiece.

Musical values were also strong. It's not unreasonable to expect tight ensemble playing from a small band placed close to the stage, and this, with odd exceptions, was what we got. Better still was the playing. Individual instruments emerged from the fabric of

Jonathan Dove's new orchestration with both colour and character commensurate with the activities on stage.

Stephen Rooke's Fenton and Deborah Myer's Nanetta made a delightful pair of young lovers, while their elders were realised with wicked attention to detail by Kate Flowers (Mrs Ford) and Marie Walshe (Meg Page). Pistol (David Marsh) and Bardolph (Andrew Forbes Lane) were suitably decadent, but more remarkable was Nuala Willis's Mistress Quickly, whose comic timing and astonishing bottom range were deployed to devastating effect. Best of all, in this directionless age, was the clarity with which all of the cast delivered Amanda Holden's consistently funny and apposite translation.

Despite rampant excellence from all quarters, Keith Latham's Falstaff still shone. Played with cherubic verve, his reading of the role achieved the remarkable feat of being simultaneously appealing and appalling. There might have been a touch more of the ageing rake in his performance, but a natural feeling for comic interaction and a magnificently resonant vocal presence placed him centre-stage, even when he was buried in the linen basket. Stage-hogging is forgivable in any Falstaff, yet this tendency never surfaced in Latham's performance. However thrilling the individual performances are – and some of them are nearly edible – the greatest quality of this production is the way the ensemble works together, almost like clockwork. It will bring joy wherever it lands on this substantial tour.

To 1 Dec. Booking 0121-605 6666. Then touring

## THEATRE

## All's Well That Ends Well

An engrossingly intelligent production of an old favourite. By Paul Taylor

At the end of *As You Like It*, the cynical Jacques speculates confidently about the married lives that lie in store for the various couples on stage, even waspishly informing Touchstone and sluttish Audrey that their "loving voyage" is but for two months virtual d. You can't help wondering how he would rate the more complexly dubious prospects of Bertram and Helena at the awkward conclusion of *All's Well That Ends Well*. Casting doubt over the proverbial wisdom of its title, the play shows how a resourceful, determined heroine manages to win back the immature, callous young nobleman who had deserted her on their wedding night. She can only achieve this, however, by dint of a crafty bed trick that humiliates her and throws an even worse light on her spouse's sordid defects of character. Just how joyful, then, is the play's "happy" ending?

Patrick Sandford's engrossingly intelligent production is alert to all the caveats that cluster round this particular comic resolution, but it also suggests grounds for a tentative hopefulness. Since it reprieves him from the charge of having murdered her, Paul Barnhill's callow, wriggling Bertram is visibly winced with relief at the last-minute reappearance of his now-pregnant wife, and can hardly restrain his face from breaking into unseemly smiles. More promising, though, is the gauche affectionate way he pats Helena's bump and puts his ear to it with an experimental fatherly pride. Maybe paternity, however bizarrely arrived at, will encourage him to do some belated growing up.

With large soulful eyes and an air of pained intensity, Alexandra Mathie's Helena communicates perfectly the virtuous ardour and obsessive love of this single-minded heroine, while not disguising a due distrust at the degrading procedures to which she must resort to achieve her objective. Around her, there's a fine cast, with Zena Walker's sly, tolerantly wise old Countess visibly mortified and aged by her son's derelictions, and Granville Saxton bringing a helpful touch of Windsor Davys in *It Ain't Half Hot Mum* to his vivid portrayal of the braggart Parolles as a blustering military phoney.

The production could afford to impart a stronger sense of Bertram's emotional dependence on this character, whose exposure as an eagerly co-operative traitor, in the very well-played mock-ambush scene, removes a major obstacle to Bertram's appreciation of Helena's preferable qualities. What the staging does help you see, though, is the uneasy equivalence between the way his fellow soldiers trick Parolles into a self-incriminating trap, and the deceitful stratagem by which Helena lures Bertram back into her arms.

Sandford's production actually offers an upstage glimpse of the heroine waiting as an undercover substitute in Diana's bed, while downstage the ensnared Parolles dangles over the proceedings in a net. The visual juxtaposition invites you to draw a parallel, and brings into sharp relief the question of ends and means that, throughout, unsettles this thought-provoking problem comedy.

Nuffield Theatre, Southampton to 2 Dec. Booking 01703 671771



LAURIE LEWIS

## THE OPERA

## MATHIS DER MALER

## overview

Peter Sellars directs a new production of Hindemith's opera about the role of the artist in society. Alan Titus sings the title role and Esa-Pekka Salonen conducts.

## critical view

Edward Seckerson cheered "an extraordinary evening. You know when something special is happening in life theatre." "Rarely have I felt so moved, so shaken, so elated," declared the *Independent on Sunday*. "A musical triumph," but "Hindemith's vision is greatly diminished by Sellars's production," wailed the *Times*. "We don't want him again," agreed the *Evening Standard*.

## on view

At the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden (0171-304 4000) 28 Nov, 1, 6 Dec.

## our view

The surtitles are a little trendy. Read the synopsis before you go to this evening of powerful music.

## THE ALBUM

## THE BEATLES

Natalie Cole sang with her dead dad on "Unforgettable". The Fab, er, Three on "Free as a Bird" have added to a John Lennon vocal track to lead off the first part of their six-CD *Anthology*.

Andy Gill loathed the single. "The overall effect is of a dirge. John would probably have hated it" and the whole "strangely half-cooked enterprise." "It was never like this in the golden years," observed the *Financial Times*. "EMI is charging full price even though the majority of the tracks are of scant interest to anyone but obsessives," remarked *The Guardian*.

*Anthology 1* (Apple CDpcsp 727). The six-part TV documentary begins tomorrow at 8pm on ITV.

Could it be they want to be No.1 at Christmas? It's all rather reminiscent of Dora Bryan's 1963 single 'All I Want for Christmas is a Beatle'.

## THE INTERVIEW

## PRINCESS DIANA

For those of you who have been asleep for a hundred years and have only just been kissed, HRH The Princess of Wales gave a frank interview to Martin Bashir on BBC's *Panorama*.

Thomas Sirtcliffe remained immune to a "performance of deadly humility, delivered with a deceptive inoffensiveness." "She did herself far more good than her husband did with his longer and infinitely more boring programme," said the *Financial Times*. "A truly fantastic historic performance," enthused the *Mirror*. "Stitched him like a kipper," concluded *The Guardian*.

You mean you missed it? The BBC has "not abandoned plans" to market the video.

Probably the most hyped programme in the history of TV. Whether you thought her barking or a heroine it was gripping telly.

## THE FILM

## GOLDENEYE

Bond is back and the name's Brosnan. Pierce Brosnan, Martin Campbell directs the first 007 adventure for six years, also starring Sean Bean, Judi Dench and Samantha Bond (no relation).

Adam Mars-Jones approved of Brosnan and found the film "old-fashioned but undeniably exhilarating." "The Bond franchise is redefined to make a killing," agreed the *Telegraph*. "Competent," mused *Premiere*. "Move over Bruce and Arnie... sit back and enjoy," said *Time Out*. "Bond is back at his best," decided the *Evening Standard*.

On general release.

The ever-excellent Judi Dench gives Bond a verbal dressing down as a sexist, misogynist dinosaur, but the film updates the formula.

## KEY



DICKIE FANTASTIC on the schmoose

Vibrancy. There's a lot of it about

"You must admit," says the man from the 'York Central' New York-style loft developers, "there is a vibrancy here tonight. A vibrancy that you don't find at most parties patronised by what we call the 'in crowd'. There is a vibrancy that I feel, and it reflects the vibrancy of loft living here at York Central."

He pauses, furrows his brow, and looks down at my notepad. "Would you," I suggest, "like to say 'vibrancy' one more time?" "Oh dear," replies the man. "I'm new to this. Did I say 'vibrancy' too often?" And during the remainder of the evening,

he sidles up to me a few times – slightly nervously – and shouts over the vibrant jazz band in the corner: "When you come to write your article, if it looks as if I've said 'vibrancy' too much, if it seems in any way... annoying... will you take out a couple of them?" "Okay," I agree. And I do. He said 'vibrancy' at least three more times, but I took them out.

The York Central developers have taken a big gamble tonight launching their architecturally stunning (albeit rather Eighties) penthouse loft development in Kings Cross with a glamorous showbiz party full of "style

gurus", famous hairdressers, wildly well-dressed architects and the like. The invitation itself was so aesthetically vibrant it could have been a ticket to the MTV party. The plethora of blue spotlights lighting up the building mingle nervously with the somewhat less vibrant red lights that permeate the rest of the Kings Cross region.

Obstreperous couples in shiny black PVC trousers and David Bowie haircuts yell clever and deep observations at each other over smoked salmon canapés and cranberry juice. "Minimalist," they yell, "Urban alienation. The allure of the industrial landscape." And so on. "Jesus." I hear one woman mutter to her partner. "I'm not going to live here. This is what our neighbours will be like. I won't be able to go to the shops without having to discuss Richard bloody Rogers for hours in the corridor."

Outside, a bunch of dodgy hookers and crack addicts huddle in the shadows, eyeing us with ill-disguised loathing as we wander inwards like a military coup by the liberal bourgeoisie. When you attempt en masse to transform a well-established inner-city ghetto into the set of a Mickey Rourke movie, Philippe Starck armchairs and Shiro Kura-

0171 304 4000



Between January and October of this year, 4,047 people complained to the ITC about ITV and Channel 4 programmes. 1,500 of them took exception to the screening of Martin Scorsese's film *The Last Temptation of Christ* on C4, making it the most complained about programme of the year. The ITC's attention was drawn to the fact that all 1,500 letters had the same, incorrect postcode on them. The complaint in had been orchestrated by a religious magazine, which urged its readers to write, and then printed the address incorrectly.



Princess Diana's interview on 'Panorama' was watched by 21m Britons, the biggest audience of the year. Not a bad coup by Martin Bashir, that, since his programme's audience generally numbers no more than four million. We know this sort of thing thanks to an ingenious black box placed on the top of televisions in 54,000 homes across the country. From data received from that sample, extrapolations are made that are reckoned to be as accurate as any in the field of market research. Which is a bit like saying your car is reliable, as Skodas go.



On LWT's 'James Whale Show' last 18 August, the media-friendly Tory MP Jerry Hayes told a thin gag about a black mechanical toy cat. In October, the joke was deemed by the Independent Television Commission to be in breach of Section 1.4 (ii) of its programme code, the section dealing with offence in jokes of a racial nature. The programme's producers were advised that greater sensitivity in that area was expected in future, and Hayes was obliged to write a formal apology. The ITC moved into action because it received a complaint. From one viewer.

## So where were you on Monday night?

It's claimed 21m people watched 'Panorama' on Monday: but all we know for certain is that 20,000 did. Welcome to the curious world of broadcasting, where the push of a button on a little black box can launch a career, and a single complaint can end one. By Jim White

A radio talk show host of some national eminence began his career operating the phone-in on a local station between two and four in the morning: a beat known in the business as the graveyard shift. As he nattered on about this and that, he would occasionally glance at the computer screen on the studio table in front of him. On to this screen the telephonist would type the details of callers ringing the station, anxious to air their views, things like: "Line 8: Dave from Dagenham. Subject: Who do them geezers in Brussels think

they are?" Except that, no matter how many times he said "I know a lot of you are calling, but just be patient and we'll get through to you as soon as we can" the screen in front of him remained blank. Wondering whether his job entailed little more than extended therapy, talking to himself, he approached the station controller to ask for a breakdown of the listening figures for his show. And the station controller revealed that, at the last count, he had nearly 2,000 listeners. Astonished, he thought he'd like to know more about them, so that

he could tailor his effort more directly: how old they were, what sex they were. No problem, said his controller, flourishing a sheaf of statistics. Of the 1,980 listeners he had accrued, 1,980 were male, 1,980 were of social group D and 1,980 were aged between 18 and 25. "In other words," he recalled, "they'd asked a panel of people what they had been listening to, and one bloke had been listening to me. From that they had extrapolated the figures and reckoned that since he had, then 1,979 others had too."

On Monday night, according to official figures, 21m Britons watched the Princess of Wales shaft her husband on *Panorama*. A huge number, that: only Bet Gilroy's departure from Coronation Street has come close this year. From the experience of the talk show host, though, are we to assume that this might be a fantasy figure? According to the BBC's research department, the figures were arrived at like this: 54,000 households, selected to be representative of all social groups across the country, are equipped with a little black box which they place on top of their televisions. Plugged in to the serial socket, this piece of kit also has direct access, via the telephone line, to a central data-gathering base in London, which records exactly what is being watched in each house.

Furthermore, on top of the box are a number of buttons. Every time a member of the household walks into the room to watch the television, they press their own individual button. The computer knows who is on the other end of which button and logs it, giving information on age, sex and social status of each viewer. To prevent the sample growing stale, box hold-

ers are changed every three or four months. Fifty-four thousand households is a huge sample in market research terms; it is more than 100 times the number of voters canvassed for a political opinion poll. Nonetheless, all that we can know for certain is that on Monday night about 20,000 households were plugged in to *Panorama*.

"Of course, ideally everyone would have a box," said a BBC stats spokesman, "but the technology simply does not exist to process that sort of rush of data. We feel that the sample we have provides as sophisticated a level of audience research as can be delivered for the budget." But surely there must be circumstances when the sample cannot deliver accurate data. What happens when they come across a programme, like our radio talk show host's, which has no one in the sample tuning in?

"We never give a zero rating, we simply say that programmes fall below a certain level," said the spokesman. "Sometimes overnight education programmes get very low scores, but that is because they have been videoed and watched at more reasonable times, information we can pick up on our video monitoring service. I have to say though that I have never come across a programme which no one in our sample saw." So someone watched *The Late Show* after all.

"Remember," he added, "the corporation has to feel confident in the information. This is not a PR exercise. Broadcasters need to know for their own purposes, to decide whether to commission another series of a programme."

This is the point. As hard as it may be to believe, broadcasters aim to provide the public with what it wants. In other media -

books, newspapers, even satellite television - there is a simple, brutal indicator which tells you whether you have judged the public mood accurately: the market. If your product is wanted, it sells. Broadcasters on radio and terrestrial television, however, have to rely on far more inexact sciences. And viewing figures are the least inexact of them.

LWT's *James Whale Show* was severely reprimanded by the Independent Television Commission for a joke made by the Tory MP Jerry Hayes, which was found offensive by one viewer (see panel above). This single intervention altered the future editorial content of the show. And it isn't just Jerry Hayes who has had his broadcasting career checked by complaint power. Terry Christian was removed altogether from the employ of Talk Radio UK after one listener complained about an item on his Sunday night show (though at the time, it was unlikely suggested this represented three quarters of his audience; the other listener was a half-wit).

According to James Conway of the ITC, every complaint his organisation receives is investigated. "We look at the nature of the complaint and see whether there should be any action taken," he said. "For instance, we received a complaint on Thursday from someone unhappy with the interview with Anne Marie West on ITV on Wednesday. Not because they thought the particular programme was offensive, but because they thought the whole West case was so distasteful it shouldn't be given air time. In that case we felt no action should be taken."

But in others, whole editorial direction can change from the smallest number of objections. And it is not just sex or violence,

people complain about the most unexpected things: a scene from *Mr Bean* which six viewers felt might encourage children to climb into tumble driers; a sketch from *Hale and Pace* which was thought by five people to be offensive to Catholics; or, at the other extreme, a scene from *London's Burning* which six viewers thought gave an inaccurate portrayal of paganism. Does this mean that, using the extrapolative techniques of other statistical gathering, 600 viewers were offended by the scene, but were too lazy to put pen to paper? "It's a reasonable rule of thumb that the more complaints you receive the more people were unhappy," said Mr Conway. "But not always."

Sometimes, as Mary Whitehouse's National Viewers and Listeners Association has learnt very well, a small number of complainers can make a vastly unrepresentative noise. If you are going to make a campaign complaint, however, make sure you don't give yourself away.

By far the biggest mail bag the ITC received this year was for the screening of Martin Scorsese's *Last Temptation of Christ* on Channel 4 (see panel above).

"We had a clue that someone was orchestrating that complaint," said Mr Conway, "because every single letter had the wrong post-code. Our address had been incorrectly printed in a magazine which suggested that if enough of its readers wrote in to us, the screening could be stopped. Of course, just because a pressure group orchestrates a complaint doesn't negate it. But you have to be careful in assuming it is a representative sample of viewers."

Sometimes the ITC acts without any complaints from viewers, as in the case of *This Morning* with *Richard and Judy* which, in

August, was fined £500,000 for product placement in a competition. And more recently action was taken on the over-explicit nature of programming on a satellite sex channel.

"Given the nature of the audience tuning in to that programming," said Mr Conway, "we were unlikely to receive a complaint if it was too explicit." There is, however, a group of people even smaller and even more powerful than the black box owners and the complainers determining what is shown on television: the television critics.

"The problem is," said one leading documentary producer, "senior commissioning editors don't watch television. They rely entirely on the buzz a programme generates to assess its worth. And since the only indicator of buzz they know is the critics, fantastic weight is given to their opinions."

This is, so insiders claim, one of the main reasons why British sitcoms are so poor. Sitcoms take time to develop, for character to emerge, for audiences to become familiar with their rhythm: the first series of *Blackadder* was, after all, a considerably less funny beast than the last. But critics, forced to review the first episode, are wont to find them unamusing. This, coupled with unspectacular viewing figures, mean they are generally killed off before a second or third series can be commissioned.

"Critics ought to be careful before slagging off a programme," said the anonymous source, "you may be preventing the programme maker from working again."

And, of course, from putting themselves at the mercy of little black boxes and lone viewers armed with pen, paper and a grievance.

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## The Dogg has his day in court

Edward Helmore reports from New York on the opening of rapper Snoop Doggy Dogg's trial for murder

The murder case against the rapper Snoop Doggy Dogg in Los Angeles is echoing loudly the trial of the last famous and wealthy black defendant to see the inside of the Central Criminal Court House.

As if by rote, Snoop Dogg's defence, led by Johnnie L. Cochran, has targeted the LAPD for abusive and sloppy investigation. Investigators have admitted to losing the shell casings from the murder weapon and the victim's bloody clothing. The defence contends that the police destroyed evidence, prosecutors maintain that what was lost is insignificant. "Want me to say those famous words?" Cochran asked reporters last month, alluding to his closing arguments to the OJ Simpson jury. "If it doesn't fit, you must acquit."

Snoop Dogg, aka Calvin Broadus, is charged with the murder of Phillip Woldemariam in Los Angeles on August 25, 1993. Prosecutors allege that Dogg ordered his bodyguard and co-defendant, McKinley Lee, to shoot

Woldemariam from a black jeep driven and owned by the rap star in a gang-related drive-by murder.

Law enforcement sources say that Woldemariam, 20, and Dogg, 24, had connections with different street gangs. The victim, a member of the By Yerself Hustlers, apparently resented Dogg, listed as a member of the Long Beach Insane Crips, for moving into his neighbourhood during the recording of his four-million-selling record, *Doggystyle*.

On the evening of the shooting, an argument erupted between the two in front of Dogg's apartment and a car chase ensued that ended with a fatal shot into Woldemariam's back. The defence contends that Lee shot Woldemariam in self-defence after he drew a gun on Dogg who is currently free on \$1m bail.

This week, after a month of pre-trial hearings and weeks of probing panelists about their attitudes toward the LAPD, the criminal justice system, OJ Simpson and rap



Doggystyle Photo: LFI

music, the sides agreed on members of what is described as an "OJ-neutral" jury.

One prospective juror was rejected after he opined that since the Simpson verdict, panelists should be subject to IQ tests. Another said that though she had listened to and read magazine articles on rap she "still hated it". Meanwhile Snoop Dogg, like Simpson, has been playing down his image as bad boy; he turns up to court each day in a smart blue suit and shows little emotion, perhaps because, given the reputation of the LAPD and Cochran's record for securing acquittals, he has little to fear.

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## Gilbert Adair

This year I found myself, gratifyingly, out of step with the literary establishment. I much enjoyed Umberto Eco's *The Island of the Day Before* (Secker), a scintillatingly written (or rather, employing a musical analogy, scintillatingly scored) narrative of whimsical erudition; as also Kazuo Ishiguro's magnificent, misunderstood *The Unconsolable* (Faber). My book of the year, though, is Milan Kundera's *Testaments Betrayed* (Faber), a collection of nine masterly essays on the condition and vocation of the artist. To revive a whiskey old chestnut of the Christmas books pages, "Not a day passes but I dip into it". Corny but true.

## Hugo Barnacle

Alan Isler's *The Prince of West End Avenue* (Cape) pictured a Jewish retirement home in Manhattan as a veritable Elsinore of backstabbing and remorse, and was wonderfully funny with it. Richard Ford's *Independence Day* (Harvill) was a check-list of middle-aged doubts and fears, but avoided either indulging or patronising its characters. Norman Mailer in *Oswald's Tale* (Little, Brown) reconstructed the short life of JFK's probable assassin with an insight that made the usual conspiracy theories look like so much cerebral Meccano.

## Malcolm Bradbury

The book trade has been miserable this year; the books have been good. I'm grateful to have had two major novels, Salman Rushdie's *The Moor's Last Sigh* (Cape) and Martin Amis's *The Information* (HarperCollins). The first is an especial pleasure, since here is a great and persecuted writer back to the top of his form; the second marks the transition of one of our most vivid creators of atmosphere into the fiction of middle-age. Kazuo Ishiguro took a risk in breaking free of the reticence and minimalism of his previous work. *The Unconsolable* (Faber) is a true act of writerly courage, as well as an important experimental novel.

## Gordon Burn

Almost everything I've read this year has had to do – sometimes unconsciously, often tangentially – with the events at 25 Cromwell Street in Gloucester. *House* by Rachel Whiteread (Phaidon) contains five essays, principally a typical tyro piece by Iain Sinclair. *The Body in Pain* by Elaine Scarry (Oxford) is a brilliant meditation on the vulnerability of the human body to physical and psychic assault. Andrew O'Hagan's strange, revered *The Missing* (Picador), part autobiography, part old-fashioned pavement-pounding, marks the

most auspicious debut by a British writer for some time. The fiction I've enjoyed most is *The Destiny of Nathalie X* (Sinclair-Stevenson), William Boyd's second collection of short stories, and *Sabbath's Theater* (Cape), Philip Roth's filthy masterpiece. My novel of the year is *Independence Day* (Harvill) by Richard Ford, the unexpectedly symphonic sequel to *The Sportsman* (1984), which is coming to be seen as the landmark American novel of its decade.

## Donald Cameron Watt

1995 brought a crop of books from 50th anniversaries. *VE Day and VJ Day*. The best were Richard Overy's succinct *Why the Allies Won the War* (Cape), David Reynolds's masterful and moving *Rich Relations: the American Occupation of Britain 1942-1945* (HarperCollins) and a brilliantly original study by Nicholas Cull, *Selling War: the British Campaign against American 'Neutrality' in World War II* (Oxford). Best of all, however, was Noel Annan's marvellously readable marriage of memoirs with research, *Changing Enemies* (HarperCollins). For light relief I turned to Terry Pratchett's latest Disc-world fantasy *Maskerade* (Gollancz). I am saving this year's Booker winner, by a former student in my department, for Christmas.

## Barbara Cartland



The first choice for my favourite book is by our brilliant historian, Christopher Hibbert. It is entitled *Nelson: A Personal History* (Penguin) and will be a source of inspiration for any student of history. Another famous hero, Douglas Fairbanks Jr, in his wonderful book, *A Hell of a War* (Robson), has written a fascinating account of his experiences in the last war, when he served alongside Lord Mountbatten in the US Navy. Lastly, John Pearson's book on J. Paul Getty and his heirs, *Painfully Rich* (Macmillan), is a compelling book and eminently readable.

## Roger Clarke

Gore Vidal's life has been spent leading up to *Palmpest: A Memoir* (Deutsch). Pompous but a raconteur of genius. William Burroughs's *My Education: A Book of Dreams* (Picador) is a treasure-trove. Photographer Larry Clark's

*The Perfect Childhood* (Scala/Thames and Hudson) is familiar territory: grunge and teenagers (he directed *Kids*). Paul Auster's essays on creativity *The Red Notebook* (Faber) are aethereal in comparison. David Peat's quirky *Blackfoot Physics* (Fourth Estate) and Peter James's *The Sunken Kingdom* (Cape) are about magic science and a Turkish Atlantis respectively.

## Dermot Clinch

Provocative, complex, just the right side of pretentious, pianist-critic Charles Rosen's *The Romantic Generation* (HarperCollins) sets new standards for thinking and writing on Schumann, Liszt and Chopin. Maynard Solomon's psychobiography of Mozart (Hutchinson) has much about "Plump-Strumpf", less about music, but reads like a detective story. Ever wondered why audiences are silent? James H. Johnson's *Listening in Paris* (University of California Press) gives the definitive socio-cultural answer, with narrative and analysis inspiringly mixed. Finally, the francophile's dream: where do you find the freshest *chèvre* in Toulouse? Which *charcuterie* is Cahors's finest? *Coffe 1995* (Guides Baland), available in supermarkets across France, changed my life for a summer.

## Colin Dexter

I'm still amazed at the detective writer Minsie Walters. *The Dark Room* (Macmillan), her fourth novel, hooked me from the word go. She has the supreme gift of being a storyteller – for me, this is everything. Walter Moseley, whose *RL's Dream* (Serpent's Tail) came out this autumn, is emerging as the best of the contemporary American crime novelists – he's heading for great things in the Chandler mode. But the really big book I read this year, I got lost Christmas: Juliet Barker's massive, lovingly researched and perceptive biography of the Brontës (Phoenix).

## Geoff Dyer

What an disappointing year it was! The two books I was most looking forward to were the ones I most enjoyed: Albert Camus's *The First Man* (Hamish Hamilton) and Thomas Bernhard's *Extinction* (Quartet). Both were magnificent, both were their authors' final testaments – beyond that they could not have been more different. Jay Winter's *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (Cambridge) was a sustained, scholarly investigation of the cultural aftermath of the Great War. Winter's title also sums up Erich Hartmann's haunting, unforgettable *In the Camps* (Norton), a collection of photographs of the concentration camps as they exist today. I cannot remember having seen photographs which explore so powerfully the relationship between place and memory.

## Felipe Fernandez-Armesto

In *Green Imperialism*, Richard Grove's creative scholarship traces environmentalism to the world of Gauguin, where troubled expatriates struggled with the fragility of paradise. *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe Vol. 1* by RW Southern (Blackwell) displays the mind of our most sensitive historian grasping a vast medieval project to restore knowledge forfeit in Eden. In *The Later Tudors* (Oxford), Penny Williams enlivens the traditional formula of an Oxford history without sacrifice of authority. John Keegan's *Warpaths* (Hodder) is a beguiling example of the trend for fusing history and travel. Adam Thorpe's *Still* (Secker) and Francisco Rebollo's *Rasero* (Weidenfeld) are novels fired by historical imaginations which historians should envy.

## Robert Fisk



In a cruel century, we read cruel books. "They intended us to die along with them," Michael Collins says of the 1916 Dublin martyrs. "They didn't explain that to me. Was it explained to you?" A fictional but mightily realistic

Collins in *The End of the Hunt* (Sinclair-Stevenson), the last of Thomas Flanagan's Irish trilogy, ending in 1922; as good a book as any to clarify history while peace still trickles through the Belfast streets. Tim Pat Coogan's *The Troubles* (Hutchinson) took me up to 1995. Amid the snows of Russia, Ryszard Kapuscinski, the greatest living foreign correspondent, guided me across the *Imperium* (Granta) – the collapsing Soviet Union – with the cold eye of a Pole who understands cruelty.

## Penelope Fitzgerald

Margaret Forster's *Hidden Lives* (Viking). Forster found mysteries and secrets, not all of which she could solve, in her story of three generations, ending with her own tough struggle to get the education, the career and the marriage she wanted. Not golden memories, exactly, but something more interesting. Richard Ingrams's *Muggeridge: The Biography* (HarperCollins). With calm authority – the only way to do it – Ingrams has managed to contain wonderfully well the outrageously unquiet spirit of a great journalist. Poy Simmonds's *F-Freezing Alphabet* (Cape). An enormous success with 3-year-olds who are themselves nice and warm under the duvet.

## Roy Foster

For those like myself absorbed in the Yeats world, three books managed to shed light in 1995. William Murphy's *Family Secrets: William Butler Yeats and his Relatives* (Gill and Macmillan) is a treasure-trove of letters and anecdotes, richly textured and spiced with sympathetic irony. Gifford Lewis's beautifully produced *The Yeats Sisters and the Cuala* (Irish Academic Press) at last does justice to the printing and design of the Yeats sisters' arts-and-crafts enterprise. And Lucy McDiarmid's and Maureen Waters's edition of Lady Gregory's *Selected Writings* (Penguin) supplies plays, folk-tales and autobiography with a perceptive introduction that genuinely reassesses this complex and endlessly resourceful woman.

## Margaret Forster



Enjoying is different from admiring, especially where books are concerned. I enjoyed Nick Hornby's *High Fidelity* (Gollancz) without admiring it; I admired *The Year's Midnight* by Alex Benzie (Viking) for what it tried to do, but I was glad when I'd finished it. But when enjoying and admiring come together that is something: this year this happened most satisfactorily of all with an autobiography, *The Railway Man* by Eric Lomax (Cape). I've always been drawn to accounts of any kind of imprisonment, and this is the most admirable I have ever read, but it was how the author describes his last for revenge, and how he finally dealt with it, which impressed me most. A rare book – exciting, moving and written with a clear and definite purpose.

## Patrick French

During the summer I found myself reading the collected works of Joanna Trollope, by accident I like to think, and was captivated by her mild subversion of traditional British values. *A Village Affair* and *The Rector's Wife* (Black Swan) were the best. But my favourite book this year must be *Tsuguhito Takeuchi's* enthralling study of early cross-cultural social and trading links, *Old Tibetan Contracts from Central Asia* (Daizou Shuppan Publishing).

## Sue Gaisford

Henrietta Leyser's *Medieval Women* (Weidenfeld) is the best history book I've read for years, full of stories and surprises and written with gentle elegance from enormous knowledge. The appendix suggests a recipe to cure every female ailment: it includes, among its 37 ingredients, purified peonies, Macedonian pelitory and fleawort. More recent history comes from the BBC's superb team of exiled reporters, distilled into *From Our Own Correspondent, The First Forty Years* (BBC/Pan),

which would make a good Christmas present. And once again Hilary Mantel produced my favourite novel of the year: *An Experiment in Love* (Viking) is written with subtle perceptiveness, sharp wit and canny wisdom.

## Lyndall Gordon

Mark Bostridge has made a distinguished debut with his life of Vera Brittain co-authored with Paul Berry (Chatto): a full-scale biography that leaves behind the standard plod of pedigree to grave. This thoughtful portrait of a dauntless feminist and pacifist combines the readability of a novel with the authenticity of fact. Joan Smith's *Full Stop* (Chatto), the fifth of her intelligent crime novels, opens up the disturbing but little-discussed subject of sexual fear – an experience most women would find absorbingly familiar. Finally, John Hollander's field-changing collection, *American Poetry of the 19th Century* (Library of America, 2 vols).

## Christina Hardymont

Fanny Trollope's *Widow Barnaby* (Alan Sutton), first published in 1839 and reprinted this year to accompany Teresa Ransom's excellent biography of the author, is Jane Austen with the gloves off. Mother of the more famous Anthony but just as good a storyteller, Fanny spins a compulsively readable and very funny yarn of debt, double-dealing and the seamier side of Bath society. Too close to the bone for the prudish Victorians, today Fanny deserves to come back into her own. Ann Wroe's *A Fool and his Money: Life in a Partitioned Medieval Town* (Cape) is history as quest, told with such vivid turns of phrase that it reads like watching a film. Alice K. Turner's *History of Hell* (Robert Hale) traces the idea of the Great Below from Ancient Mesopotamia through medieval harrowings to modern times (hell is other people, said Sartre; hell is oneself, said TS. Eliot). It's full of unforgettable characters and themes which jump time and place to recur with uncanny similarities: ferryman and fearful hounds, divine queens and dread lords, visitors on hopeless quests for lost loved ones.

## Roy Hattersley

The best biography of the year was Peter Ackroyd's *Blake* (Sinclair-Stevenson), an exciting evocation of the poet's life and times, a

# CHRISTMAS BOOKS

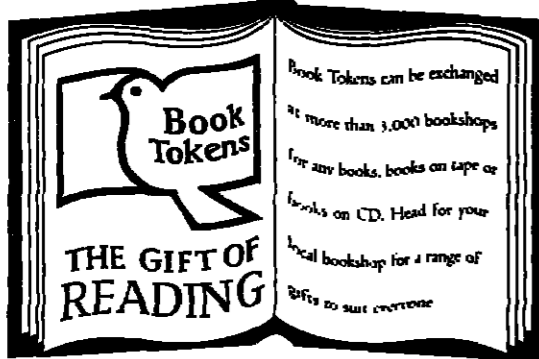
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Who enjoyed what in 1995? Independent reviewers and contributors choose their favourite titles, and on pages 8-11 we suggest books for the Christmas stocking

I never read enough poetry, but Mark Dory's *My Alexandria* (Cape) announced that rarest of birds, an American poet who is neither preening, portentous nor self-absorbed. His technical assurance lends a marmoreal beauty to poems about dying, danger and memory in the time of AIDS. Art history comes my way too seldom as a reviewer, but I've relished the shroud reappraisals in James Christen Steward's *The New Child* (Washington), a lavishly detailed account of the way English 18th-century artists changed the way we look at our beloved little monsters.

#### Angela Lambert

Pat Barker's *The Ghost Road* (Viking) was the best book I read this year, 'nuff said. I also greatly enjoyed Margaret Forster's *Hidden Lives* (Viking), a memoir of three generations of her own family in Carlisle which throbbed with authenticity and painful discoveries. Charles Blackmore's quite different journey of discovery took him to the Taklamakan Desert in China, from which his brilliant book takes its title: *The Worst Desert on Earth* (Murray). Finally, Jane Rogers's remarkably inventive novel *Promised Lands* (Faber) introduced me to this author, all of whose books I have now read and hugely admired.

#### Jeremy Lewis

Shrewd, sad and funny, D.J. Enright's *Interplay* (Oxford) is a nimble combination of commonplace book and autobiography. He has some harsh word to say about literary biographies (and quite right too), but even he might be moved and entertained by Selina Hastings's elegant life of Evelyn Waugh (Sinclair-Stevenson). Those anxious to linger in that particular patch of English literary life should turn to the second volume of Betjeman's *Letters* (Methuen), edited by Candida Lycett Green. The comic mispellings and strained jocularities are, mercifully, less in evidence than in Volume 1: both books add up to a marvellous self-portrait of a man who, like his poetry, was a good deal more melancholy than he appeared on the surface.

#### Lachlan Mackinnon

Richard Davenport-Hines's *Auden* (Faber), more a collection of biographical essays than a linear biography, powerfully evokes the fertility and brilliance of England's greatest 20th-century poet. Auden once proposed marriage to Hannah Arendt, whose bleak account of the event is in the

some measure the original of his Mr Biswas - it's the comedy of a Trinidad bad-John who turns into a Hindu pundit. Also: a new life of Robert Burns by Ian McIntyre, and the early life of Andrew O'Hagan, as told by O'Hagan, among other stories, in his book *The Missing* (Picador).

#### Lucasta Miller

Anyone who, like me, has been working on the Brontës must have breathed a huge sigh of relief when Margaret Smith published her definitive edition of *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë* (Oxford) - after 150 years, all this marvellously biting and passionate correspondence has finally been pulled together in a text you can trust. Margaret Forster's *Hidden Lives* (Viking) an intimate account of three female generations of her own family, was more illuminating than any social history. As a complete illiterate when it comes to Physics and Chemistry, I was amazed to find myself absorbed in John Carey's *Faber Book of Science*. And Peter Conrad's literary critical study *To Be Continued: Four Stories and their Survival* (Oxford) had moments of such disarming cleverness that I had to admire it despite its flaws.

#### Jan Morris



In an exceptionally good year of reading and reviewing, five books gave me particular pleasure in different ways. I greatly admired Lawrence James's tremendous *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (Little, Brown). I loved Penelope Fitzgerald's hauntingly peculiar novel, *The Blue Flower* (Flamingo). I shall never forget Theo Richmond's elegiac but hearteningly entertaining *Konin* (Cape), about the fate of a Jewish shtetl in Poland. I was exhilarated by Patrick French's rip-roaring biography *Youngusband* (HarperCollins). But most of all, I have to say, I enjoyed Ivan Turgenev's *A Huntsman's Sketches* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow) - and in translation at that.

#### Jeff Nuttall

Eric Hobsbawm's *Age of Extremes* (Abacus) came none too soon with its sane perspective on the century's implosion. Gillian Rose, writing like a poet in *Love's Work* (Chatto), helps us to live in circumstances which are never likely to be what we want. Iain Sinclair in *Radon Daughters* (Vintage) and Cormack McCarthy in *The Crossing* (Picador) both demonstrated that prose continues to be a vehicle for visionary invention, while Maggie O'Sullivan's *In the House of the Shaman* (Reality Street) spun wild panoramic verse that rescues poetry from all fears concerning its moribund state in the era of so-called post-modernism.

#### Cristina Odono

When the dust of history settles, future generations will wonder at our present fascination with in-your-face macho scribbles which threaten to drown out the quiet, dignified writings of our most consistently undervalued novelist, Anita Brookner. As I read her latest, *Incidents in the rue Laugier* (Cape), I once again marvelled at the quiet elegance of her prose. Another favourite novel: David McLaurin's *Mortal Sins* (Duckworth) - a Banana Republic setting for the battle between good and evil. Best biography: Clive Fisher's *A Nostalgic Life*, a haunting portrait of Cyril Connolly (Macmillan).

#### Peter Parker

Pace George Walden, two novels on historical themes: Pat Barker's *The Ghost Road* (Viking), in which she manages to pull together, in a deeply moving conclusion, the many rich strands of her haunting First World War trilogy; and Mark Merlis's *American Studies* (Fourth Estate), a funny, troubling and beautifully written book about love, lust and betrayal in the McCarthy era. Two books about poets: the alternately hilarious and harrowing second volume of Betjeman's *Letters 1951-1984* (Methuen),

edited without affectation or piety by his daughter; and Richard Davenport-Hines's hugely intelligent and illuminating account of what it was like to be Auden (Heinemann).

#### Harriet Paterson

It was pure literary pleasure to read *The Siren* (Harvill), selected works of Giuseppe di Lampedusa: haunting childhood memories of Sicily, one or two lyrical pieces of fiction, but best of all his passionate and humorous literary criticism. My historical novel of the year is the wildly ambitious *Rasero* (Weidenfeld) by the new Mexican writer Francisco Rebollo, a full immersion in the Enlightenment, rank with politics, sex, philosophy and death. Finally, the 16th edition of the great *Story of Art* (Phaidon) must qualify, with new additions on the 20th century: 45 years on, Ernst Gombrich is still as delightful as ever.

#### Roy Porter

Two books have given me unexpected delight this year: *The Red Queen's Dream: Or, Lewis Carroll in Wonderland*, by Jo Elwyn Jones and J. Francis Gladstone (Cape), which charmingly unlocks the enigmas of Alice; and Steven Lukes's *The Curious Enlightenment of Professor Curran* (Verso), a witty up-dating of Voltaire's *Candide*. Three works have done the essential job of exposing the corruption of public life and government in this country begun by the crazed Mrs Thatcher and continued by the creep who succeeded her: Will Hutton's *The State We're In* (Cape); Simon Jenkins's *Accountable to None: The Tory Nationalization of Britain* (Hamish Hamilton); and Peter Hennessy's *The Hidden Wiring: Unearthing the British Constitution* (Gollancz). Copies of each make essential gifts for any relative still to be contemplating voting Conservative.

#### Miranda Seymour

I absolutely loved *The Young Disraeli* (Sinclair-Stevenson). Jane Ridley paints a marvellously spirited and intelligent portrait of Dizzy in his dissolute years as an inveterate gambler who paid his debts by writing the lush novels which caused Lady Salisbury loftily to dismiss him as "very clever, but superlatively vulgar". *Journey to the Ants* (Harvard) is by Bert Hölldobler and Edward O. Wilson. You don't need to be a myrmecologist to be enthralled by stories of the equivalent of building the Great Wall of China. The photographs are breathtaking. Jane Rogers's *Promised Lands* (Faber) is a novel which deserved to be on the Booker shortlist for its powerful and mesmerising account of conflict in the first Botany Bay settlement.

#### Ned Sherrin

John Berendt's *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (Chatto) had me most on the edge of my chair - but if I had been listening to the Radio 4 reading of John Betjeman's *Letters* (Methuen) at the time I might happily have relaxed. I giggled through Colin Clarke's *The Prince, the Showgirl and Me* (HarperCollins) and await further exposures. Gore Vidal's *Palimpsest* (Deutsch) was not ruined by his two television appearances and I'm sorry that he is still not speaking to me. I dare say we shall both live long enough. I do hope he does. Keith Waterhouse's *City Lights* (Hodder) is required reading, as is Michael Parkinson's *Sporting Profiles* (Pavilion) - he's the best sports interviewer.

#### Christopher Sinclair-Stevenson

John le Carré was on top form with *Our Games* (Hodder), a wonderfully sour book in which he displayed remarkable prescience about developments in Chechnya. Barry Unsworth's *Mortality Play* (Hamish Hamilton) was that rare book which left me wanting it to be longer. Justin Cartwright's *In Every Face I Meet* (Sceptre) defied George Walden's animadversions against the sins of nostalgia by being chillingly up to the minute. And, for pure entertainment, wit and elegance, I must pick out Julian Barnes's *Letters from London* (Picador). Mrs Thatcher will never seem the same again.

#### DJ Taylor



For anyone even remotely interested in 19th-century literature, Edgar F. Harden's magisterial *The Letters and Private Papers of William Makepeace Thackeray* (2 vols, Garland), a supplement to Gordon N. Ray's equally magisterial four volume edition of 1945-6, is an extraordinary piece of scholarship - 1,600 pages of new and refined material on what is already one of the better documented mid-Victorian lives. In a completely different arena, I liked Ivor Crewe's and Anthony King's thoroughly exhaustive chronicle *SDP: The Life, Birth and Death of the Social Democratic Party* (Oxford). Two novels I enjoyed were Hilary Mantel's *An Experiment in Love* (Viking) and Timothy Mo's *Brownout on Breadfruit Boulevard* (Paddleless).

#### Barbara Trapido



This year I enjoyed Robertson Davies's *The Cunning Man* (Viking), a febrile mix of high Anglicanism and high drama. Also Michael Dibdin's brainy thriller, *Dark Spectre* (Faber), read heart-in-mouth all the way. Catching up with last year in paperback, I loved John Berendt's *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* (Chatto) and Louis de Bernières's *Captain Correlli's Mandolin* (Minerva). Best pre-publication treat was *Angels and Men* by Catherine Fox (Hamish Hamilton), a first novel to watch for in January.

#### John Walsh

I was very impressed by Barry Unsworth's *Mortality Play* (Secker). Cynics suggested the book was just Rosemary Sutcliffe medievalism, but it was much more than that. Unsworth's feat is to dramatise a shift in sensibility, from Dark Ages to Enlightenment, through the plight of six am-dram strollers, and to evoke with conviction a time when a reasonable man could imagine he was watching the Antichrist riding through the trees to steal his unshriven soul away. Martin Amis's *The Information* (HarperCollins) was a calm, domesticated trot through old themes of envy, glamour, success and betrayal, but none the worse for that. And *High Fidelity* (Gollancz), Nick Hornby's tale of mid-life crisis among the record racks, deployed a few hundred casually acute perceptions about would-be sensitive malehood.

#### Robert Winder

Tony Harrison's *The Shadow of Hiroshima* (Faber) confirmed his mastery of both easy idioms and epic themes. He once referred to himself as the Yorkshire poet who came to read the metre; but here the clap-your-hands rhythm and rhymes, stirred by an icy, sorrowful anger, made a fierce ballad out of the blast. Bryan Magee and the late Martin Milligan put together a remarkable philosophical correspondence in *On Blindness* (Oxford). The latter's own blindness allowed them to argue, with at times revealing defensiveness, about the nature of knowledge. And even those not enchanted by Gore Vidal's novels will find it hard to resist the lordly condescension and avid witticisms in his memoir, *Palimpsest* (Deutsch).

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## CHRISTMAS BOOKS

His Number One fan: a wind-blown Frank Zappa, wayward maestro of the Mothers of Invention, photographed by Norman Seft in 1976. From 'Rolling Stone Images of Rock & Roll' (Virgin, £30), the most dazzling and stylish exhibition of rock imagery ever seen.



## Hot news from the astral plane

Lucy O'Brien finds the rock 'n' roll tribute industry in full swing



The problem with rock biographies is a tendency to build a hallowed portrait of artistic greatness when the subject works within an essentially ephemeral, iconoclastic medium. Jimi Hendrix, for instance, is a tough call: the man who influenced A Generation, who played his guitar with his teeth, who mangled "The Star Spangled Banner". His fiancée, Monika Dannemann, has decided to counteract the showbiz myth by concentrating on his private, soulful side in *The Inner World of Jimi Hendrix* (Bloomsbury, £17.99). Although she met him only 18 months before his death, the couple packed in a lot of late-night discussions about spirit guides and astral planes. This book, published on the 25th anniversary of his death, features a collection of her oil paintings, all with Hendrix, spiritual traveller, at the centre. Some are done in that awful, mawkish Athena style, while others pack genuine power, almost surreal and Dalí-esque in their vibrancy. If one perseveres through the New Age platitudes of her accompanying text, the book

acquires more depth as it develops, culminating with a frank, gripping account of the strange circumstances surrounding Hendrix's death. Most poignant are the photographs that Dannemann took in her garden on the day before he died – a vulnerable, contemplative figure amid the rhododendrons.

The dead rock star industry flourishes with latter-day icons. Assorted editorial luminaries of *Rolling Stone* magazine have contributed to a heavyweight compilation of reviews, features and photographs in *Cobain* (Little Brown, £16.99). A curious combination of reporting as it happens, and reporting on the reporting, this book tells the story of Kurt Cobain, from the Seattle underground scene to superstar status with Nirvana, to his violent suicide in 1994. As if overtaken by the scale of their task, top-notch writers like Donna Gaines and Michael Azerrad are reduced to the romantic retrospection of lines like: "Cobain's burning stomach was his bleeding heart". Far more pointed in his assessment is Greil Marcus, who, driving through Arkansas shortly after Cobain's death, noticed his huge absence on Oldies, country, Lite Rock and even hip-hop radio stations. For them, he writes, "Kurt Cobain didn't die, and neither was he ever born".

The sleekly dramatic design of this book is at the other extreme from the rough fanzine culture



A man of wealth and taste: Mick Jagger in excelsis, photographed by Peter Anderson after a press conference in the back yard of Le Beate Route, Soho (from the 'Rolling Stone' collection)

of his early days. Reproduced here as a double-page spread, that tacky *Seattle Times* shot of Cobain's body and the detective standing by the door, takes on a staged quality, death becoming Art. The pictures are evocative, the tribute heartfelt – but apart from a sparky, unexpurgated interview with Courtney Love long before Cobain died, the book feels a little overwrought.

Cobain died before he had made a decisive impact outside the rock world. By contrast, at 80 years old this month, Frank Sinatra has had long enough to fête a string of presidents, fight for civil rights, and date several classic movie stars. "He is the Mercedes Benz of men", Marlene

Dietrich once said, and Nancy Sinatra's pictorial biography, *Frank Sinatra, An American Legend* (Virgin, £25) does little to dispel that myth. Arranged like a high class journal-cum-scrappbook with boxes, cuttings and family photographs, the book is on one level a simple portrayal of Pop as patriarch, patriot and swooning saloon singer. On another level, though, there is room to delve beneath what critic Boh Greene describes as "the hip, rich, slightly arrogant guy... the ring-a-ding-ding image". Although his Mafia connections are predictably played down, along with his switch from Democrat supporter to die-hard Republican in the Seventies,

what emerges through sad little segments is the emotional charge of Sinatra as father and family man – the mention of Nancy's mother, for instance, weeping after he left her, fainting into the dinner plate from stress. And Sinatra himself, putting his head in a gas oven shortly after his marriage to Ava Gardner broke up. "What a period of time that was," he told his daughter, "it was all Mondays."

It is a task digging out such nuggets from the razzmatazz, but these insights show a more sensitive, complex Sinatra than the legend dictates. Not only did he master long breath-phrases by swimming lengths under water, he was also subject to the

doubts that dog us all.

"It was like putting a jumbo jet in a little room and turning all the engines on full blast, except the bottom end had been taken out and all the treble was on. Really scary stuff," says Tony Cohen of Oz rockers The Birthday Party when they returned to Melbourne after a stint of "making it" in London in 1980. The Birthday Party spawned one of punk's most erratic, anti-social and gifted pioneers in Nick Cave. In *Bad Seed* (Little Brown, £16.99) Ian Johnston attempts to portray his life, from a middle-class upbringing in Melbourne to the late Eighties when he was addicted to heroin, living in Berlin, reputedly jacking up and writing in his own blood, to the Nineties when he ended up sober, in Sao Paulo and in love.

Thorough on Cave's musical influences, tracing his development from the bawling punk days to the Old Testament epic pop-blues of the Bad Seeds, Johnston seems to shy away from analysis of Cave's personal motivations – why he became addicted to heroin, for instance, and why, in the Birthday Party, he behaved like such a plonker.

Johnston's workmanlike approach tends to bury the more revealing comments from assorted friends like Lydia Lunch and Roland Howard and discontents such as Screaming Jay Hawkins. The vintage R&B screamer expressed outrage that,

on a 1985 tour, he was called on to support Cave: "I said, just a minute, back up, my records were sold here before Nick Cave was born. Before his daddy knew how to get an erection!" Such moments provide a welcome disruption to a reverent tone.

Coinciding with the release of "Anthology 1" and the moptop nostalgia trend, Beatles books are now flooding the market. *It Was Thirty Years Ago Today* (Bloomsbury, £14.99) is a collection by the Sixties *Life* photographer, Terence Spencer, showing The Beatles at their lovable stage, just before they broke America. Although they have a rigorously clean, documentary style, some shots – such as that of Lennon lolling back-stage with that sardonic, amused expression on his face, or the Fab Four looking pensive in their tour car – have a startling immediacy.

In *A Hard Day's Write* (Carlton/Little Brown, £12.99) meanwhile, rock journalist Steve Turner has trawled archives and primary sources to unearth the stories behind every Beatles song. Did you know that "Please Please Me" was about oral sex? That "Help!" was originally going to be a slow, Dylanesque number rather than a jolly Beatles tune? And that the Lucy of "Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds" is now a 31-year-old teacher of children with special needs? A Christmas feast for fact completists everywhere.

## Trumpets of whimsy

Dermot Clinch hears secret harmonies in the music books in the shops this Christmas



An entry for Diana, Princess of Wales in the index of a book is always revealing. In Luciano Pavarotti's *My World* (Chatto and Windus, £16.99) our future Queen of Hearts appears on pages 43-46. Being an incisive, critical, hard-edged book (well, fairly) one anticipates revelations. Page 46: "I am a friend to both Princess Diana and the Prince of Wales." Page 44: "Both Charles and Diana are very nice people."

You can't expect *Panorama* every day, I suppose. It would be wrong to suggest that *My World* is entirely without candour, though. "I am happy in spite of my weight," confides Pavarotti, and obesity is a rather touching leitmotif in his book. The Princess of Wales is relevant here again. Sitting next to her at dinner in New York one evening, the tenor gazes at her plate. "Great

prawns!", he remarks, or words to that effect. Yes indeed, replies Her Royal Highness. "Great prawns!", Luciano repeats, a few minutes later. She nods enthusiastically; some moments pass. Pavarotti, by now a desperate man, returns to the attack. "Listen" he says. "I tried twice with no success... May I have one of your shrimp?"

You can't help warming to him. There is little, one suspects, of lasting value in his book, but its lack of pretension and desire to please are engaging. And the picture of marital bliss it paints – notably in Chapter 13: *My Wonderful Family* – is as moving as an operatic scene. Luciano may occasionally "look at another bowl of pasta or pretty face". Mrs Pavarotti saucily confesses, "but there is still plenty of *linguine* at home". It can't be that same Mrs P., can it, who just two months ago was about to sue her hubby for a settlement of some 80 million dollars, or so they said?

Pavarotti hired a ghost-writer, one William Wright, for his book. Some musicians, such as Welsh tenor Robert Tear, prefer to write their own. *Singer Beware* (Hodder

& Stoughton, £18) is the sequel to Tear's autobiography, *Tear Here*. One of our finest singers, sadly Mr Tear has a prose style which is less than crystalline. "Whimsy trumpeted winsome in an orgy of chic delight" reads a representative sentence from early in his text, and much that follows is likewise crimped and curfewed.

Why go in for fictional allegories in mock-medieval pasts when a straight anecdote would do the job so much better? Tear invents an alter-ego for himself called "Max Hughescoq". Worse, he populates his fantasy world with musicians called "Sappho Diesel", "Angelika Dyke" and "Heinrich Camp". Benjamin Britten gets something of a roughing up and you wonder if the animus is artistic or personal. "Without his homosexuality what would he be?" asks Tear, nastily.

Elsewhere, Tear quotes a celebrated dictum of the composer, John Tavener, that the true test of a work of art would be to "dig up" a sixth century man and ask what he thinks. For a fuller experience of this severely practical composer,

the reader can now unearth John Tavener in *Glimpses of Paradise* by Geoffrey Haydon (Gollancz, £20). From the shock horror of *The Whale* in '68 to the recent comforts of *The Protecting Veil*, Tavener's must be one of the most extraordinary careers in contemporary music. The story of how his mystic harmony has reaped its earthly reward in automobiles is less well known. Rolls Royce Silver Shadow, Bentley Mulsanne Turbo, bottle-green Jaguar XJ6 with walnut fascia, they're all here. The character of this important composer, however, remains ultimately elusive. For those in search of greater musical rigour, the prescription had better be Beethoven (Oxford, £25), a work of fairly blood-chilling intellect by William Kinderman of the University of Victoria, British Columbia. Beethoven forces us, the author argues, "to reconsider the nature of aesthetic experience itself". His impressive study is strictly for those who like their Adorno confounded by their Gadamer and their Kant locking horns with their Hegel.

Having sweated through which, you might be hungry for that decent but unfashionable thing, the straightforward life & works biography. Nothing techno or fancy; no mere catalogue of memoirs; something keen to impart information, history, social background, the basics. Phaidon's *20th-Century Composers Series* (£14.99 in paperback) may just be the answer. The first commitment is out: *Hindemith, Hindemith and Hence, Stravinsky, Ives to Cage and Beyond, Webern, Bartok, and yes, The Beatles*. "Harmonies in fifths give way to three-second creates a picturesque impression of a blaring car horn..." It's 1965, it's "Baby You Can Drive My Car", and it's all by now perfectly respectable. Intelligent on the inside, matt black and silvery on the outside, Phaidon's new series is worth keeping an eye on.

Not that long ago, the only opera guide thought worth having was Kobbé. Fat, smug, ruddy-faced, it delivered its minimal judgements as if sitting on the lawn at Glyndebourne, without fear of contradiction. The market these days is

mercifully wider, and two new or newish books are worth a browse this year. *The Penguin Opera Guide* (£20), admirably edited by Amanda Holden, is concise, responsible and dry. Organised by composer, its entries can look a touch school-reporty. Good to be reassured that the "dominant figure" in *Saul and David* is indeed Saul, though, and that Carl Nielsen assigned him an "impressive" death in the final act. For all its furrowed mien, this distillation of the *Viking Opera Guide* may well be the best of its kind available. Comparison with the much revised *Dictionary of Opera and Operetta* (Bloomsbury £18.99), a solo work by the late James Anderson, would be out of place. Friendly, opinionated, enjoyable, Anderson expresses his harsh judgements decorously. Menotti, Gian-Carlo "is thought by some" to be "shallow, inconsequential and devoid of any dramatic insight". The author makes the alarming confession in his introduction that he "would happily exchange every opera ever written for one symphony of Sibelius". Whets the appetite, I suppose.

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THE LANGUAGE QUARTERLY

# Fishy apple and left-over goose

Christopher Hirst lifts the steaming lid on Christmas books by TV chefs



**Food**

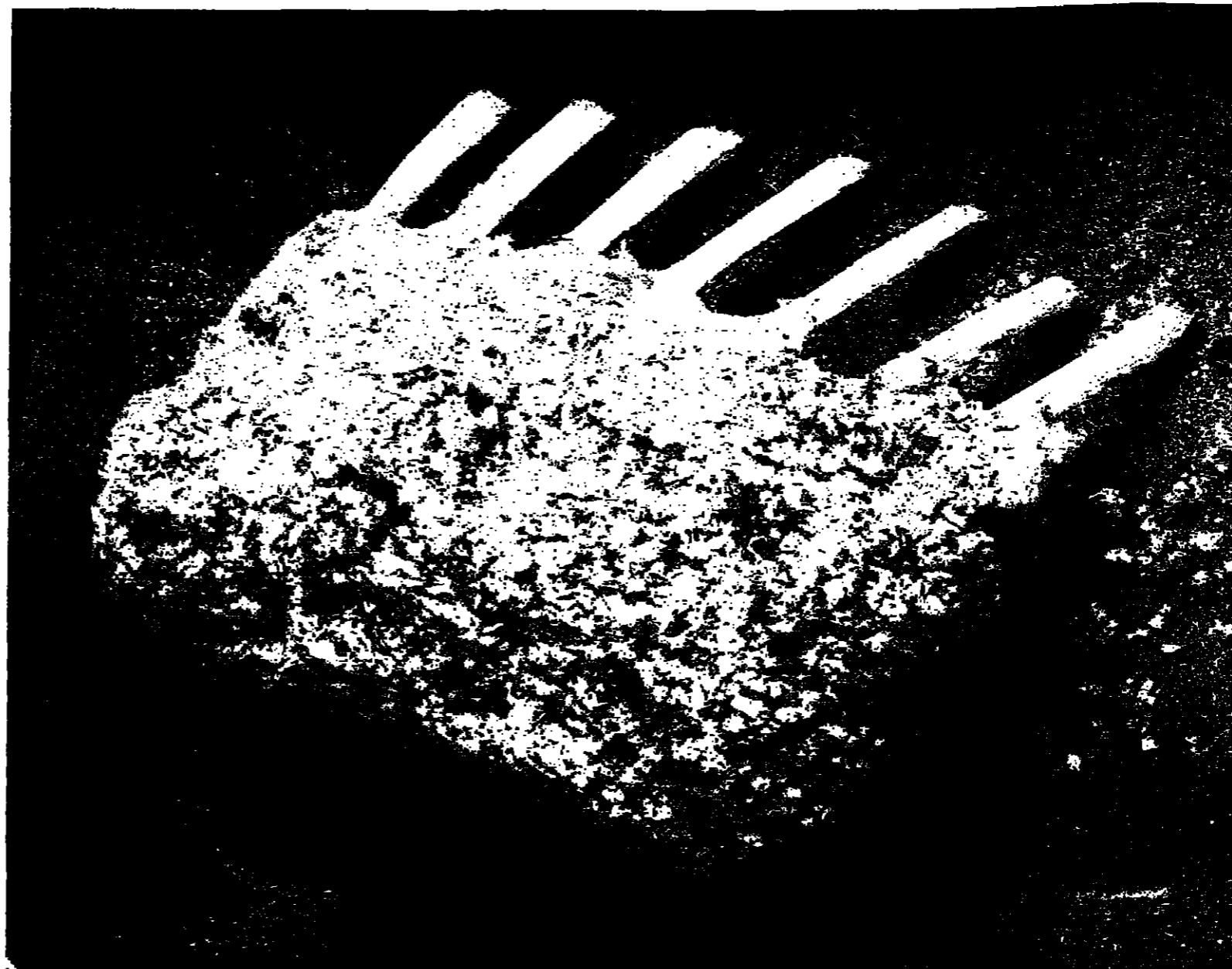
Bobbing in the wake of this year's blockbuster from The Blessed Delia are glossy offerings from four other TV chefs — one who is midway through her third series, one welcome newcomer and a pair of old lags.

Based on her Channel 4 series, Sophie Grigson's *Meat Course* (BBC Network, £17.99) ranges across a sanguinary spectrum from Roast Beef and Yorkshire Pudding to the sublime but simple Vitello Tonnato (veal and tuna, an unlikely but very happy pairing). Her recipes are admirably clear and precise. According to a friend who cooked the dish, Grigson's inclusion of a single strip of dried orange zest in her Daube de Boeuf "made all the difference".

Unlike certain cookbooks which exude all the warmth of a Nasa engineering manual, this has been written with human beings in mind ("gently waggle your fingers under the skin of the chicken..."). Though *The Real Meat Cookbook* by Frances Bissell covered the same territory in greater detail a couple of years ago (including, for example, a chapter on goat dishes), Grigson's work benefits from luscious colour photography — you can virtually crunch the crackling on the back cover — and its 160 recipes will satisfy the most avid carnivore. One problem, though, is getting a proficient butcher who sells properly-hung meat. Grigson admits she hasn't been able to find one since moving to Northants. If she can't, what hope is there for the rest of us?

Rick Stein's *Taste of the Sea* (BBC, £16.99) is a worthy accompaniment to what was probably the BBC's best-ever cookery series. A lucid and inspiring writer, Stein is an evangelist for our "mackerel-crowded seas", though he should have resisted the urge to prance in the briny wearing his chef's whites for the benefit of the jacket photograph. The book contains 160 recipes together with a comprehensive explanation of techniques and local fish species. Typical of Stein's invention and simplicity is Hot Shellfish with Garlic and Lemon Juice, which is just a big plate of freshly cooked *fruits de mer* in a sauce containing olive oil, parsley and a chopped chilli pepper. I've done it on two or three occasions and each time its appearance has drawn gasps, its taste has elicited sighs.

Which is far more than can be said for *Moules à la Crème* from Crafty French Cooking by Michael Barry (Pavilion, £16.99). He once produced the dish on the *The Food and Drink Programme*, with his cohort Chris Kelly providing vigorous salivatory endorsements. Coincidentally, I was planning to have mussels for dinner, so I cooked them, as directed, with cornflour, cream and — madness, I know — apple juice. The result was something that tasted like a fishy apple-pie but without the crust. (The version printed here has been amended to include cider and dry white wine as alternatives to the juice.) The main problem with this book is that Barry's annoying "crafty" approach to cooking — taking shortcuts, substituting ingredients — is wholly alien to the world's greatest cuisine. As a result, his recipes are mundane, ersatz and often weirdly un-French. His *Salade Fermier*, for instance, includes iceberg lettuce, which is something of a rarity in France, and "crumbly blue



Take one breaded stickleback... no, it's the Rack of Lamb with a Herb Crust from 'Sophie Grigson's Meat Course'

cheese — Roquefort, Gorgonzola or Stilton", while his version of the classic Confit of Goose is reduced to a "good way of using up the leftovers".

Keith Floyd specifies two bottles of Muscadet in his version of *Moules à la Marinère* — though it is for six people. Selected from his previous 10 books, *The Best of Floyd* (Michael Joseph, £16.99) reminds you of the gifted cook hidden behind the irate, rather desperate figure we see on the box. Basically, this is Seventies bistro cooking — Gazpacho, Beef Stew with Garlic and Prunes, Zabaglione — but Floyd has good taste and his recipes are easy to follow. Often his best ideas, such as Fresh Broad Beans with Bacon, are the simplest. Unfortunately, the book is marred by egotistical introductions written in a breathless, laboured style, as if by a schoolboy who has just read Hemingway ("It is Provence. It is summer. The town clock strikes its tiny bell 12 times.") Whatever criterion was applied in the selection of his best recipes, it wasn't economy. His recipe for the New Orleans dish, Oyster Po'Boy (fried oyster in baguettes) incorporates 48 bivalves and will set you back about £25 for two sand-

wiches.

Let's turn to a real cookbook produced, miraculously to relate, without the benefit of an accompanying TV series. The dishes in *The Classic Food of Northern Italy* by Anna del Conte (Pavilion, £19.99) are devoted to a less familiar aspect of Italian cuisine, based on butter, polenta and rice rather than olive oil and pasta. Neither sun-dried tomatoes nor mozzarella appears in the book. Encyclopaedic within its ambit, the recipes range from the sustaining stews of the Alpine borders and the fish soups of the Ligurian coast to the game roasts of the Marches. Del Conte is persuasive even about Venetian cooking, while admitting that few restaurants in that magical city do it justice. The book's heartland is the region of Emilia Romagna, dominated by the culinary heaven of Bologna. Under her penny-plain titles — Bread with Raisins, Poached Chicken in a Vinegary Sauce — Del Conte's recipes are clearly described and informatively introduced. This is a definitive volume which anyone who wants to cook real Italian food should acquire.

In *Food of the Sun* (Quadrille, £20), Alastair Little and Richard Whitting-

ton adopt exactly the reverse approach to Anne Del Conte. Spreading their net across the whole Mediterranean, they take the view that a host of dishes, perfected in the warm south over the centuries, can benefit from a certain amount of additional tinkering or, as they prefer it, "incremental improvements and modifications". As you would expect, there is some good creative cooking here but, in many respects, the successor to the authors' award-winning *Keep It Simple* might have been titled *Bigger It Up*.

Take, for mystifying example, one of their more extreme non-canonical concoctions, Tarama with Shredded Lobster. Firstly, why bother bringing these two perfectly fine foods together? Secondly, how do you tackle it? Tarama is a dip, lobster isn't. Do you fork up the lobster before applying a lump of bread to the former? In general, the less the recipes have been amended — as with Black-Eyed Peas & Spinach or a perfectly straightforward Cassoulet — the better they are.

The book is not helped by a messy design and an excessively mannered text. It very nearly followed Michael Barry's mussels into the bin when I

found myself being addressed as "gentle reader".

*The Fine Art of Dining* (Little, Brown, £17.50), handsomely illustrated by Graham Rust, is sub-titled "Recipes From World-Famous Chefs and Kitchens". It includes offerings from Raymond Blanc (Tartare of Marinated Wild Salmon), Albert Roux (Soufflés with Swiss Cheese), Jeffrey Archer... Hang on a minute. It can't be him. Oh yes it can. Donning his starched toque, the Brillat-Savarin of Grantchester proposes a Smoked Chicken Salad (Actually, it's not too bad — but skip the raisins and bean sprouts). There's also Norma Major's Rabbit Chasseur and, keeping things balanced, Glynis Kinlock's Onion Cake (*Feiser Nionod* in Welsh) in which, oddly, she doesn't specify red onions.

Compiled for a charitable cause, this eclectic mix of chefs and celebs — La Tante Claire meets an upmarket branch of the W.I. — works unexpectedly well, with many recipes offering potential as conversation pieces. I mean, does the newly slender Oprah Winfrey really eat a dish consisting of potatoes mashed with double cream, butter and creamed horseradish?

## Nectar in the aisles

Nicholas Faith savours this year's bumper crop of wine guides



**Wine**

Confronted by 17 of this autumn's books on alcoholic drinks, I can only assume that publishers retain a touching confidence in the British public's thirst for knowledge of beers, spirits and, above all, wines. So I'm sorry to disappoint them: the one truly original book in the genre comes not from a regular publisher but from German publisher Greer's favourite supermarket chain, Sainsbury's. The *Sainsbury's Pocket Food and Wine Guide* (at £2.95, also the cheapest of the lot) is the best guide ever produced, designed to help the reader decide what wine to serve with what food — and what food will go with any particular bottle you have handy.

The authors' research was certainly thorough (at the only sampling session I attended I gave up after tasting a mere 32 wines combined with five veal dishes). They cover every type of dish, from macaroni semillon to Rogan Josh (Pinot Grigio or a lightly packed Chardonnay). They are not out to upset preconceptions: dry sherry really does go "brilliantly" (a tiresome favourite adjective of theirs) with olives. Roquefort with (awny) port. Kathryn McWhirter and

Charles Metcalfe, the wife-and-husband team responsible for the Guide, are both members of the Octagon, a supposedly select group of wine writers. According to Malcolm Gluck: "It is widely believed that the impoverished adherents of this sect possess a special handshake, and slobber scarce New World wines over each other in arcane rites of fidelity." This is typical of Gluck, the Vinny Jones of wine writing. What is also typical is that in his two books (*Gluck's Guide to High Street Wine* and *Superplonk 1996*, and *Gluck's Guide to Supermarket Wine*, Coronet, both £4.99) he gives a comprehensive and largely reliable guide to the huge number of worthwhile but not-so-fine wines available in Britain.

Gluck formerly played for Faber, rather too gentlemanly a club for him, and they've tried to replace him with a pitifully inadequate substitute by Tom Stevenson entitled *SuperBooze 1996* (£4.99). Faber shows its true strength in a more specialised field with Stephen Brook's book *Sauternes* (£16.99), one of a long-running series. This includes a number of duds as well as several brilliant monographs, notably Anthony Hanson on Burgundy and John Livingstone-Learmonth on Côte du Rhône) which are the standard works on their respective regions. Brook joins the club with a book which is both thorough and well written. He is appreciative of the winemakers' difficulties, and

recounts some of his own: his encounter with Noel Labat, owner of Chateau Menota came "as he drove into the courtyard while I was talking to his wife. He did not take kindly to my presence and yelled at me while peeing against the wall of the *chais*. I took a hasty departure, so my researches are incomplete... The only vintage of Menota I have tasted is the 1983, which did not incline me to taste any others."

Gluck is competing in a crowded field of regular annual guides. Daddy of them all is the 19th edition of Hugh Johnson's *Pocket Wine Book* (Mitchell Beazley, £8.99), which remains a model of concision and reliability — though he's old-fashioned enough to devote more space to German wines, 95 per cent of which are simply sugared grape water, than to Australia and New Zealand combined.

Three other guides (all from members of Gluck's beloved Octagon) take slightly different approaches. *Grapevine: the Complete Wine-Drinker's Handbook* by Tim Atkin and the *Independent's* own wine writer Anthony Rose (Headline, £6.99) provide thorough and reliable coverage, in a single volume, of what's available from supermarkets, wine merchants, chains — and the best shops in Calais and Boulogne. Oz Clarke has lent his name to a guide to the world's wine regions, *Oz Clarke's Wine Guide* (Websters/Mitchell Beazley, £9.99), written by a lot of other people, some rather good (like me) on the

Côte du Rhône for example) but it's a package's book, not a personal guide. Robert Joseph tries, and mostly succeeds, in combining the lot, wines and outlets, in a single volume. The *Sunday Telegraph Good Wine Guide* (£7.99), greatly helped by the tastings held for the annual Challenge he conducts for *Wine* magazine. Sadly, the best-written of them all, the *Evening Standard London Wine Guide* by Andrew Jefford (Pavilion £9.99), has a misleading title, with less than half the book devoted to London's wine shops and wine bars (and nothing on restaurants with especially good wine lists).

Most ambitious project of the year is Oz Clarke's *Wine Atlas*, with new-style maps which try and show the lie of the land in the world's best wine regions. A great idea, with informative texts, but sadly the maps aren't sufficiently sharply defined to give Hugh Johnson's *Wine Atlas*, a run for its money.

Finally, two books on beer, an increasingly fashionable subject. The pace-setter, beer's answer to Hugh Johnson, remains Michael Jackson, and it's a compliment to both to say that the sixth edition of Jackson's *Pocket Beer Book* (Mitchell Beazley £8.99) is on the Johnson level. More ambitious is the *Ultimate Encyclopedia of Beer* (Carlton/Prion £16.99) by Roger Protz, a pioneer Camra-man. It's well written and gives a good feel for the world's breweries and their brews.

## A touch of zane

David Aaronovitch's sanity is threatened by a surfeit of fun



**Humour**

Never turn down a job. That's my motto, because in this business it could be your last. And the task — reviewing the Christmas humour books — seemed simple enough. A couple of cartoon annuals, a *Private Eye* anthology, Alan Coren's obligatory volume and an early ride home on the Dockland Light Railway.

The thud with which the enormous pile of Yuletide funnies hit my desk reverberated around Canary Wharf. Four floors down, in the offices of the *Daily Telegraph*, the defence correspondent dived for cover and a couple of the most bellicose leader writers hung white flags from the windows. By the end of the third day's reading I was giggling uncontrollably. I was also trapping cockroaches in a jamjar and teaching them Polish. It wasn't until a week later that I was ready to put pen to paper. Here, at long last, are my thoughts.

All publishers know that humorous books are kept and read in the lavatory, whence they travel to boxes in cupboards, and finally to jumble sales or school fairs. All women know that the only people who read in the lavatory are men. To be successful, a funny book should be aimed at men and divided into chapters that take no

longer to read than a successful bowel movement and two shakes of a lamb's tail.

It would help if, in addition, it were funny. This may seem a strange injunction, but my week's research convinces me that either humour is so subjective that all any reviewer of funny books can say is "Read it yourself", or else that most humour is sold on the basis of the author's reputation in some other medium.

TV comedians are the most fertile source of books that owe their genesis to no visible intrinsic value. Consider Paul Merton's spoof autobiography of a 60-year-old light entertainer, *My Struggle* (Boxtree, £7.99). This is a 160-page plodding pastiche of the type of memoir that no-one in their right mind would ever have read in the first place, illustrated by old photographs with feeble captions. Merton is a busy and successful comic — so how much time did he actually spend on this book?

A lot more than Peter Ustinov did on *Quotable Ustinov* (Michael O'Mara Books, £10.99). This appalling tome seems to be the product of some publishing anorak spending a year combing all of Ustinov's voluminous work for aphorisms and epithets, extracting them from their context (thus rendering them practically idiotic) and showing them next to a series of dreadful drawings. Still, if you know someone who can profit from "Corruption is nature's way of restoring our faith in democracy", and feel that you have £11 more than you know what to do with, this is for you.

Another fiver and that awkward brother or ex-boyfriend can be the proud owner of *In Search of Happiness*, the book of the BBC TV series (Macmillan, £16.99). This was a brilliant idea (send Angus Deayton round the world to look at the bizarre ways that some folk get their jollies), which involved the laconic funster in encounters with self-reproachers and polygamists. There's some interesting stuff here, but I felt that the series didn't live up to the idea, largely because of Deayton's famous detachment. The 56 photos of Deayton in the book — looking detached, where he isn't actually asleep — stand testimony to the publisher's faith in his pulling power, if not to their judgement. I would have preferred a few shots of Deayton's co-author, Lise Mayer, who is a talented comic writer.

There's the usual BBC comedy annual aimed at the younger male (*Lee and Herings List of Fun*, BBC £8.99) which is as incomprehensible to me as Monty Python was to my Dad ("what's so funny about a dead parrot?"); the usual Glen Baxter offering (*The Wonder Book of Sex*, Little Brown, £9.99) which proves that every good idea has a natural shelf life and that it's always much shorter than the life of its begetter. Ronald Searle has put his incomparable artistic talents to strange use in *Something in the Cellar* (Souvenir Press, £14.99), where exquisite drawings on the theme of wine utterly fail to amuse any but the most bibulous.

I know what you're thinking: "Bloody mean-spirited wretch, this Aaronovitch. Probably the kind of chap who only laughs at road accidents and children with razor blades". Let me reassure you. Buried deep in this mountain of zane, whimsy and chuckle are a couple of gems. Inside the *Magic Rectangle* (Gollancz, £14.99), the collection of Victor Lewis-Smith's TV reviews from the *Evening Standard*, brings together the most barbed, cruel and offensive attacks ever written on the wit and wisdom of those who make and present programmes. His diatribe against Vanessa Feltz, who he speculates has gained all the fat that Oprah and Ricky Lake have lost, is alone worth the cover price. A request from the *Standard* for a review tape must send shudders down the spine of producers from Shepherd's Bush to Grampian.

Which brings me to the *Private Eye Book of Craig Brown Parodies* (Corgi, £4.99). I had never read any of these pieces, and have generally passed over Brown's work, offended because every week he reviews restaurants where I cannot afford to eat. More fool me. This is comedy at its tightest, most literate and most satisfying. Brown as Martin Amis is prolix and self-indulgent, as Alan Clark is painfully priapic and degenerate, as Jeanette Winterson he howls for love, art, social justice and decent tea. And when it comes to Brown's Keith Richard, here's some serious medical advice. Leave this till after what nannies used to call "voiding".



# Visions of Paradise

Anna Pavord puts on her wellies and weeds out the best gardening books of the season



Frost on the lawn: the author's garden, from David Hicks's 'Cotswold Gardens', photographs by Andrew Lawson (Weidenfeld, £25)



Nothing this year has made me more envious than the photograph of a flower border at St Nicholas, the late Bobbie James's garden in Richmond, Yorkshire. It is one of a sumptuous collection of black and white images in *The Country House Garden* by Brent Elliott (Mitchell Beazley, £40). These have been culled from the archives of *Country Life* and Dr Elliott has woven through them a narrative of exemplary clarity which tells the story of garden design from 1897, when *Country Life* was launched, up to the Second World War.

The border is not what you would normally think of as a flower border. A wide comfortable grass path runs straight through an avenue of young apple trees. Under the apples are sheets of iris, running as far as you can see. Among the iris are randomly planted tulips. It is ravishing and I want it even more than the cast bronze fauns guarding the pool at Harold Peto's garden, Iford Manor in Wiltshire, which also features.

The book is printed on thick, glossy paper which reproduces these old black and white photographs in mesmerising detail. Images of the powerful, dominant garden of the late Victorian era give way to the softer, more intimate and enclosed settings of the Edwardian age. Lutyens is there of course, but the erudite Dr Elliott introduces a number of much less well-known figures whose influence was equally important. Gertrude Jekyll is generally supposed to have had the greatest influence on planting design in the Arts and Crafts epoch. The author argues that her pedestal should be more properly occupied by William Wildsmith, head gardener at Eckfield Place, Hampshire.

Gardens that we now think of as being settled and venerable are revealed here in their new, rather too crisply pressed clothes. The octagonal water garden at Folly Farm in Berkshire, a Lutyens/Jekyll design for the Astors, is startlingly spartan. So are the terraces at Port Lympne, Philip Sassoon's Twenties house in Kent, rising in cliffs of uncovered stone. From the centre of the bathing pool there, wrote the garden's designer, Philip Tilden, there rose a fountain "that used up all the water in the district in an hour". That must have made Sassoon popular with his neighbours.

No book could be a better companion than this on a long, lazy Christmas afternoon. Clearly and authoritatively, Brent Elliott leads us through the maze of influences, styles and personalities that brought about some of the most influential gardens of

the age. He is particularly good on the rise of the woodland garden and the arrival of the rockery, both of which were the results of an increasing trend for plantsmanship rather than design to be the defining characteristic of a garden. We are still suffering from that imbalance today.

A *Photographic Garden History* by Roger Phillips and Nicky Foy (Macmillan, £25) divides its images by subject. These cover a wide range – doorways, gates, staircases, pools, pots, potagers, topiary – interspersed between double page spreads of gardens such as Knightshayes and Hever Castle, which exemplify a particular style or age in gardening. The bulk of the book is concerned with Western gardens, but there are two excellent sections at the end, covering those of China and Japan, often muddled in the minds of those of us who garden in a different tradition. In the main, the images come from grand gardens and the way they are arranged makes this a book that you can dip in and out of with great pleasure.

If you asked a Chinese or Japanese tourist to name the first English garden that came into their mind, it would probably be Sissinghurst, whose creator, Vita Sackville-West,

died more than 30 years ago. It now belongs to the National Trust, who have gardened there as long as the hallowed V.S.W. herself. It is not surprising then that Tony Lord's brilliant new book *Gardening at Sissinghurst* (Frances Lincoln, £25) should reveal the extent to which the place has altered, in some cases quite radically, over the last three decades. The polyanthus carpeting the nuttery was a key feature of the garden in the late Thirties (the Nicolson got the idea from Gertrude Jekyll whom they had visited at Munstead Wood). Soil sickness prevents any being grown there now. Harold Nicolson never liked his wife's choice of "suburban" azaleas for the most walk, a brash selection of turn of the century cultivars. Nor, it seems, did the National Trust. Gradually, the most jarring colours were removed as the old bushes were rejuvenated, leaving chiefly soft yellow tones to hold the space. This is a fascinating book which benefits to a great extent from the memories of Sissinghurst's recently retired gardeners, Pamela Schwerdt and Sybille Kreuzberger. Tony Lord's own photographs provide a perfect complement to the text.

Severely practical in its content and layout is *The New*

*Houseplant Survival Manual* by Jane Bland and William Davidson (Ward Lock, £10.99). The format follows a formula that is easy for newcomers to interpret. Light, position, temperature range, watering, feeding and other instructions to keep plants happy are laid out with symbols on one side of the page, with the rather frightening number of pests and diseases to which houseplants are subject illustrated in gory close-up. A staggering number of houseplants are given as presents at Christmas. This manual will help to ensure they last beyond January.

For a stocking look for *The Garden: Visions of Paradise* by Gabrielle van Zuylen, one of the New Horizons series published by Thames and Hudson (£6.95). It is not much bigger than a standard paperback but is beautifully designed, the text squeezing its way round a rich series of images. Here is the Pitti Palace in Florence as it looked in the 16th century. Here is the well-faced face of Jean-Charles Alphand who laid out so many of Paris's parks. Read Pliny the Younger's description of his villa garden at Cività di Castello in Tuscany. It was written c.100 AD but could have come straight from the pages of this month's *Gardens Illustrated*.

## Books for Christmas



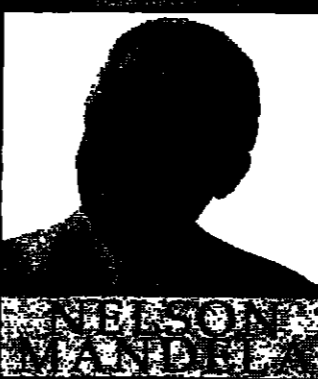
WHO GOES HOME?  
Scenes from a Political Life



LONG WALK TO FREEDOM  
Nelson Mandela

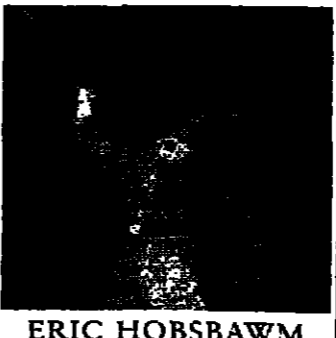
"The most entertaining book that I have read for many a year"  
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LONG WALK TO FREEDOM  
Nelson Mandela



"Humane, dignified and magnificently unembittered"  
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AGE OF EXTREMES  
The Short Twentieth Century 1914-1991



ERIC HOBSBAWM

"Magnificent"  
Independent  
"A masterpiece"  
Guardian

PATRICIA CORNWELL



"A superb writer"  
The Times  
"Cornwell is on magnificent form"  
Evening Standard



QSWALD'S TALE

Almost half-a-century ago Norman Mailer commenced his writing career with a masterpiece. Now he's done it again!  
Allan Massie



LITTLE BROWN

## A life beyond newsprint

DJ Taylor is both beguiled and enraged by autumnal collections of journalism and lectures



There are certain brands of literature whose very survival, like that of the oryx or the manatee, seems a matter for wonder and congratulation. The reprinted "middle article", the hardbacked cheer-up stuff from the broadsheet centre pages, the celebrity lecture series, even the meditative compilation of "books that have served me well" – one had thought them all dead beyond recall. Somehow, though, with Christmas upon us and the festive tills a-jingle, such trifles precariously endure.

Having laboured through Lynne Truss's relentlessly chipper novel *With One Lousy Free Packet Of Seed* last year, I approached *Making The Cat Laugh* (Hamish Hamilton, £10.99) with the gravest apprehension. In fact this collection of "Single Life" columns from *The Times* and elsewhere turns out to be a pleasant surprise. If Truss's accounts of a petrified spinster existence spent in front of the television in South London have a life beyond

newsprint, it is because of the slight edge behind their habitual self-deprecation. Some quintessential "English" properties are on display here – the flat, the cat, the jokes about cuisine for one. Underneath, though, lies a sharp sense of missed opportunities and life lived at one remove. In case this sounds unusually tedious, Truss is often very funny; even the cat-fixation – usually a kind of graveyard for the comic writer – seems narrowly tolerable in her practised hands.

At any rate Truss's recycled musings have worn rather better than those of her *Times* colleague Bernard Levin. Working out why so one dislikes the pieces in *I Should Say So* (Cape, £16.99) is a fascinating exercise. It is not that Levin chooses the wrong subjects or approaches them in the wrong way, for he has a fine line in moral indignation; it is not even that he isn't funny, for he frequently is. In the end, it is simply because of his overweening conceit. Like the late Beverley Nichols, whose style he increasingly begins to approximate ("I have a message for whichever of the saints is on doorknocking duty at the Pearly Gates tonight..."),

there is a sense that Levin's only real subject is himself. The best bits are the obituaries, even if they tend to come garnished with surfeits of Levin; the worst bits, the A-funny-thing-struck-me pieces, in particular an essay entitled "What's in a word?". Mr Levin's thoughts on the late Kurt Cobain will also seem unreasonably funny to anyone under the age of 40.

Hugo Williams's columns, collected under his TLS masthead *Freelancing* (Faber £14.99) are much better value. For once the subtitle – "Adventures of a Poet" – gives a good idea of the book's contents. The astonishingly youthful-looking author (53 going on 35) has been living the life of the vagrant literary man ever since he left school in 1960 and turned up on the doorstep of Alan Ross's *London Magazine*. There follows a lively round of creative writing classes, festivals and bookish to-ing and fro-ing. For all the warmth of Williams's literary reminiscences – he even manages to rekindle some interest in the charred sticks of bygone Soho – some of the best pieces leave the literary ghetto altogether. "A short bad film about violence", for example, is an unsparing

account of family squabbling, while the tribute to Tara Browne, the "lucky man who made the grade" from *The Beatles' A Day in the Life*, is a potent evocation of Swinging London.

Terry Waite's *Footfalls In Memory* (Hodder £14.99) is very much a companion volume to *Taken On Trust*, his best-selling autobiography. Stuck in his solitary prison cell, and starved of books, Waite kept himself sane by trying to remember his favourite pieces of literature. The resultant anthology is a reasonably interesting trawl through an idiosyncratic Christian library, with autobiographical introductions. Although there are no surprises, it's nice to get a complete version of McGonagall's ode to Shakespeare, not often enough reprinted.

Margaret Atwood's *Strange Things: The Malevolent North In Canadian Literature* (Oxford, £15), originally delivered as the Clarendon lectures in Oxford, is a treat. Concentrating on the North and its representation in poems and prose, Atwood is particularly good on the ill-fated Franklin expedition of the 1840s and its cannibalisation by later generations of Canadian writers for their own mythical and

political ends. Subsequently taking in Grey Owl, Robert W. Service (the creator of Dan McGrew) and Alice Munro, Atwood's characteristic subtlety survives the journey from lecture hall to printed page. It's a pity she couldn't have found space for Jack London, whose Yukon tales knock most Frozen North writing into a cocked hat.

Rather less interesting are Nadine Gordimer's lapidary reflections on *Writing And Being* (Harvard, £11.95), previously delivered as the Harvard Charles Norton Lectures in 1994. While Ms Gordimer generally talks a great deal of sense – a quality not always displayed by Nobel laureates – her remarks about the writer's relationship to the human beings who form the source of their characters are sometimes a tiny bit obvious. She is better on her set books – Mahfouz, Achebe, Oz – and best of all on her South African upbringing and the impulses that led her to write. An odd ghost hangs over these accounts of the writer's pot-shots at a repressive state – reading them it is impossible not to think of the late Ken Saro-Wiwa, the very latest example of Art's ability to confound the despots.

# Escapes

INDEPENDENT WEEKEND SATURDAY 25 NOVEMBER 1995

country

Four



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Kathleen Evans, 78, runs the small Hampton Loade ferry across the River Severn with her sister, Lilian James, 83. Photograph: Newsteam

## Who will pay the ferryman?

Britain's last inland ferries are operated by a handful of determined amateurs. By Clive Fewins

**B**ryan Rogers, 63, worked for three years with a wheelbarrow moving 50 tonnes of mud and gravel from shingle banks and the riverbed to build the low jetties to enable him to run his one-man ferry operation across a muddy coastal creek in Suffolk.

In his first full season this year he reckons he rowed about 200 passengers - his dinghy takes two at a time - across the 70yd-wide creek. After paying his insurance and local authority registration fees and taking depreciation of his craft into account he reckons he lost about £300.

Fortunately, Mr Rogers is not too worried. He retired to rural Suffolk aged 60 after being a director of several companies, sold his car, bought a rowing boat and decided that his prime retirement task would be to reinstate the ferry across Butley Creek near the village of Orford. It last operated in 1920.

"I reckon this has been a ferry site for 600 years," he says. "My wife and friends think I'm a little mad, but I believe running the ferry is a worthwhile contribution to the local community. People say it is a ferry to nowhere but it is used by coastal walkers and birdwatchers. A trip up the creek is a long journey for me - but I have got a paddle."

Throughout the summer months Bryan Rogers sits beside the creek, repairs the mud and gravel jetties, which are under constant assault by the ebb and flow of the tide, and occasionally goes crabbing. When a customer turns up he charges £1 to row them to the other side.

In the winter he operates the ferry on demand, walking the half mile to the water along a field path from his home in the village of Boyton, the other side of the creek from Orford. During the winter months he urges walkers to phone

him in advance and let him know roughly what time they will be beside the creek and in need of his services.

Mr Rogers's enterprise is one of the very few new inland ferries introduced in the past few years, according to Brian Margetson. A Bedford-based structural engineer, aged 40, Mr Margetson has for the past four years been researching and recording all the estimated 110 inland ferries in England and Wales. Next year he intends to move on to Scotland.

"Since the war the general pattern for ferries has been one of decline, although there have been some encouraging signs recently," he says. "The reasons vary. In many instances bridges have replaced ferries. But one of the other main reasons for the decline is the dislike of walking nowadays. You often have to walk to get to a foot ferry and so few people seem prepared to take to their feet."

One of the most colourful inland ferries is East Anglia's last, and England's smallest car ferry, which carries two vehicles over the river Yare at Reedham, on the B1140 between Beccles and Acle.

"For many years the ferry did good business," says the licensee of the Ferry Inn, David Archer, who owns the flat-bottomed vessel and the ferry rights which he inherited from his father, who bought the pub and the ferry in 1949.

"However, with the completion of the Norwich southern bypass in 1992, drivers sometimes find it easier to drive the 25 miles from Acle in the north to Beccles or nearby Loddon in order to avoid the ferry queues, which can be very long in summer. Fortunately, the ferry is still just viable but I am having to watch the situation closely."

If the ferry were to disappear it would bring great inconvenience to people living in surrounding villages and would mean the disappearance of a colourful

landmark in the lowlands between Norwich and Great Yarmouth.

"At least there seems little chance of the ferry being replaced by a bridge," Mr Archer says. "The last time a bridge was recommended was in a 1949 Ministry of Transport report - 'Ferries in Great Britain'. We are still waiting for the bridge."

In Essex the ferry across the River Colne downstream from Colchester had been out of action for nearly 40 years before being revived by a band of volunteers in 1991. The Wivenhoe Ferry Trust now operates an April to October service in a motorboat that will seat 12. Twenty-five volunteers operate two-man crews on a rota basis on two routes, Wivenhoe to Rowdhoe (eight minutes) and Wivenhoe to Fingringhoe (two minutes).

Rod Smart, the founder chairman, says: "The service is popular with cyclists as well as walkers and shoppers, for whom it means avoiding an 11-mile drive via the road bridge at Colchester. We manage to break even and are even thinking of expanding the service next year."

A few miles round the coast near Felixstowe things have not been so flourishing. There the ferry from Old Felixstowe to Bawdsey, which was operated by three generations of the Brinkley family, closed briefly this spring when Robert Brinkley decided to give up the ferry in favour of fishing.

"It was a great shame because this year the Brinkleys celebrated 100 years of being ferryman across the Deben estuary," says Robert Brinkley. "My grandfather Charles lost a hand when he was young and had a hook fitted in its place. Staff at the now closed Ministry of Defence radar establishment across the water at Bawdsey, whom we used to ferry to work, named one of the devices they invented Brinkley's Arm."

In June the ferry was taken over by Peter Weir who is optimistic that he can make it pay. "Between June and September I took more than 9,000 people, many with bicycles, over in my 20ft open launch," he says. "It cost them 50p a time for the two-and-a-half minute crossing. A lot of walkers and cyclists now use the Suffolk heritage coastlines, so hopefully I should be able to keep going."

On the other side of the country near Bridgnorth, Shropshire, it is many years since the Hampton Loade ferry made a profit for its operators. Kathleen Evans, 78, and Lilian James, 83, who are sisters, run the small rope ferry, which is driven by the current, across the River Severn at a crossing point reckoned to have been in use since the early 17th century and that has been in their family for 38 years. Although it is a labour of love rather than a commercial enterprise, the sisters, who were brought up at the nearby Unicorn Inn, have plans for the crossing to remain in the family when they become too old to work it.

"It is a way of life. We run it in all weathers except very high water," says Mrs Evans, who keeps a constant lookout for customers on the other bank from her sitting-room window which overlooks the crossing point.

The ferry is now independent of the pub, but pubs and ferries often go together. "The reason is quite simple," says Mr Margetson. "This is because rivers like the Severn and the Wye are fast flowing and unpredictable. It was not always safe to cross and so travellers in the past needed somewhere to stay in times of bad weather and wait for the river level to drop or the flow diminish. Once a waterside inn was established it was natural that the licensee should double as the ferryman. Fortu-

nately the tradition often continues."

At Symonds Yat on the Wye the two foot ferries are owned and run by Ken Rollinson, who also owns the pubs on either side. Crossing is only safe when the river is not running too fast as both crossings are rope ferries operated by himself, his son Peter or one of the barmen. The flat-bottomed boat is propelled manually by the ferryman, who pulls on the plastic-coated cable suspended overhead.

And on the Thames at Bablock Hythe, to the west of Oxford, where the river can also be quite fast-running, the licensee of The Ferryman Inn, Peter Kelland, does his best to keep the flat-bottomed outboard-powered 12-seater going throughout the year. He reopened the ferry three years ago after a seven-year closure. Until 1965 it was a car ferry which could take three vehicles at a time.

"The best hope for small foot ferries - there are only three inland car ferries in England and Wales - is that they will manage to hold their own," Brian Margetson says. "On the Thames near London the foot ferry at Hampton, Middlesex, closed this autumn because the person running it could not make it pay, but earlier in the year another one, five miles up river at Isleworth church, reopened after many years. However, it is a non-profit-making service."

"Like village shops, it is very often a case of being run by the active newly retired and other community-spirited people. I should like to start an organisation to help these people keep in touch with each other, so that perhaps they can work together with the public to save ferries that are under threat for one reason or another."

Brian Margetson can be contacted at 8, West Street, Rushden, Northants NN10 0RT (01933 56963).

### A little local trouble

A weekly round-up of rural rumpuses

**T**he quiet Derbyshire village of Cotton-in-the-Elms has fallen foul of the flowerpot police. This summer, the village came third in the East Midlands Village-in-Bloom competition by decorating its grass verges with flower pots made out of concrete pipes. The competition over, the Parish Council made the mistake of applying for a licence for the pots. Four months later the County Council replied, saying the pots were a hazard to motorists, an obstacle for maintenance workers and would have to be removed.

Mr Roy Pritchard, chairman of the Parish Council, said: "I think we have paid the penalty for going through the official channels... It is absolutely stupid, especially when other villages have got exactly what we've got and we are the only ones being challenged. We are going to fight it - we are not removing the pots." The row continues.

The charms of the village of Flaxton, near York, have been threatened by interference from a

different quarter. The roots of three mature trees - a beech, a horse chestnut and a sycamore - on the village green have been damaged by the over-zealous attentions of Yorkshire Water.

The company had to dig a trench for a water main across the green, and instead of leaving the recommended six metres between the trench and the trees, they left one metre from the beech, 1.4 metres from the chestnut and 3.4 metres from the sycamore. As a result some of the roots were severed, which could weaken and even kill the trees. The company pleaded guilty to three offences of wilfully damaging trees and were fined £700, with £270 costs.

More than 24 tonnes of curdled milk blocked an A-road near Dorchester, Dorset, this week after two wheels fell off a tanker and it overturned. A police spokesman said that the driver was uninjured but "the smell at the scene was horrendous".

## All you have to do, say the know-alls, is shut the birds up securely at night, and stop worrying. Nonsense! Reynard is a determined and resourceful predator

**M**uch rubbish has been written in recent weeks about how easy it is to protect free-range chickens from foxes. All you have to do, say the know-alls, is shut the birds up securely at night, and stop worrying. Nonsense! Reynard is a determined and resourceful predator, and if the chickens really are free-range - on the loose, in the open, rather than confined to a big run - he will get some of them sooner or later. Never mind that we shut ours up with the greatest care every evening: still the numbers keep being whittled down.

Our fowl are particularly vulnerable, because we live on the side of a hill, separated from the wood above only by a couple of sloping grass fields. Foxes often sit in the open during the day, shamelessly fancying the selection of substantial dinners parading about below them. They have all the time in the world to choose their moment - and whenever they do pounce, it is



DUFF HART-DAVIS

sod's law that they get not one of our superfluous young cockerels, but a precious laying hen.

Luckily daylight attacks are at worst sporadic. We go for weeks without one, then suddenly get several in quick succession. One of the worst spates occurred not long before our daughter's wedding: I was sitting in the kitchen with the Rector, discussing details of the service, when I

heard a tell-tale screech-up in the garden. "Sorry!" I cried. "Got to deal with a fox." Snatching up a rifle, I ran out, shot the raider - which sure enough had killed a chicken on the lawn - and returned to our discussion. The Rector, good man that he is, did not turn a hair.

Yet if daytime visits are intermittent, nocturnal patrols are unceasing. Whenever I kill a rat I leave it out in a field, secure in the knowledge that it will have gone by morning. If we want to dispose of meat that has gone off, or supernumerated bones, they too go out, and vanish. From the faultless efficiency of the scavenger service, it is clear that sweepers come past every night.

Occasionally they make mistakes. When I found a quince dumped half way up the paddock, pitted by tooth-marks, I could only conclude that a fox had scurried it out of the orchard and carried it some distance before deciding that the

taste was not all it should be.

More often, though, the aim is all too accurate. Eggs left uncollected vanish overnight, and our most recent major casualty was a speckled hen, black and white, which took against roosting in the barn, and perched instead on a beam in an open-fronted shed. Night after night, just as it got dark, we caught her and transferred her to safety. Then one evening we forgot. At 1am we were woken by an awful death-scream, and in the morning there was only a trail of feathers to show where she had been carried off down the lane.

Fox-pressure being what it is, we were dismayed when our solitary Bramah - our champion hen, she of the furry feet - once again went broody, and opted to incubate a nest in the same open-fronted shed, on top of a stack of hay-bales. Twice before this year she had sat successfully, but both times she spent the 21 days of dangerous immobility inside a

secure coop, coming out at intervals for food and drink.

This last time my wife made her a beautiful nest in the coop, but again and again she marched off to her preferred eminence. There she was, a literally sitting target, protected only by the fact that incubating birds lose most, if not all, of their scent.

The only reinforcement we could give her was a barrier of Renardine, the age-old stink-bomb, now available as an aerosol. I should not care to say what it is made of (and nor, apparently, do the manufacturers). The effect is of well-matured tiger's or wolf's piss. The can depicts cats, dogs, rabbits and so on fleeing in all directions, and I do not blame them, so devastating is the stench.

Whatever it is, it has done its stuff. The Bramah has survived, and hatched off safely. Her brood amounts to only a single yellow chick, but once again, she has triumphed against heavy odds.

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# Four letters to put off buyers: UPVC

There's nothing like rotten old windows to put off buyers. But think twice before installing new ones.  
By Anne Spackman



The old and the new: The capital cost of double glazing when compared with the energy savings per year may take 25 years to repay' Photos: Jane Baker

The phone rings at around 7pm. "Mrs Burgess?" asks an unknown voice. "Yes," I answer, suspicious of any stranger using my married name at that time of night. "I'm ringing from Try Your Luck Home Improvements to let you know that we are offering free quotations on new doors and windows..." What they are offering is always the same: UPVC units or 1930s frames in an area dominated by Victorian and Edwardian sash windows.

If you want to replace or repair a period window you have to scour the small ads for a specialist or try your local joiner. It is a frustrating business, but it may be worth it in the long run. According to a survey carried out by Knight Frank & Rutley, nothing puts buyers off a house more than replacement windows.

Windows are the most prominent features on the face of a house, dominating its external appearance. The survey showed that buyers who wouldn't blanch

at a new kitchen or bathroom balk at the idea of replacing windows. Given the cost of doing it properly, they may be very wise.

One leading agent is currently selling a six-bedroom Victorian house with a good garden in a popular part of the Home Counties. This is the kind of house purchasers are queuing to buy, yet they were invariably put off by the picture windows. One potential purchaser went as far as getting a quote for replacing them all. It came in at over £25,000.

It is easy to see why some people have opted for plastic. UPVC windows need very little maintenance, do not warp and are cheap. They are also, normally, double-glazed, a feature which is rising up the list of buyers' expectations. It shouldn't be, according to John Fidler of English Heritage. He says people who want to cut their heating bills would do better to invest in draught-proofing or a heavy set of curtains. "The energy experts at the Building Research Establishment say that double-

glazing is not effective," Mr Fidler said. "The capital cost of double glazing when compared with the energy savings per year may take up to 25 years to repay."

The "greenest" house builders go for triple glazing, but they put it in wooden frames. This is partly because it is more ecologically sound and partly because they believe wood is better. Scandinavia, the Scandinavian firm that specialises in energy-saving new homes, uses a high quality softwood timber from Sweden for its triple-glazed windows. "The wood is far better than anything you can get in England apart from oak trees," said Mike Mapston, the technical director.

He added that they got a higher efficiency rating using wood than UPVC, partly because of the quality of the glazing and partly because of the air-tight seal between the window frame and the house. But aesthetics and environmental awareness were also part of the equation. "Timber has been shown to be the most

environmentally friendly material there is," Mr Mapston said, "and in our houses, it looks right."

Most people prefer wooden frames for aesthetic reasons. Tony Salter put in new French doors at the back of his Edwardian terrace in Dulwich, south east London, using the Original Box Sash Window Company. "They made them exactly as they had been originally," Mr Salter said. "They even found a firm in America that produced the particular type of patterned glass. The doors were one of the main factors when we came to sell the house. They tipped the scales in our favour."

The Original Box Sash Window Company was started in 1984 by John Rose, who saw a gap in the market. Mr Rose had been made redundant from an architectural practice and was selling double glazing. "People were saying it was a shame they couldn't have their box sashes done," Mr Rose recalls. "There was no service except the odd corner joiner." His company now employs 70

people from its base in Windsor. They produce near perfect replicas of a property's original windows, but with double glazing and their own draught and dust exclusion system, Sashseal. This kind of work does not come cheap. It costs roughly £1,000 to replace one full sash window.

For even older properties the number of experts available decreases with the centuries. My colleague Duff Hart-Davis recently described replacing some windows in his 16th-century Cotswold stone farmhouse. He had the good fortune to come across Michael Waddingham, an architect who has developed a very slim double-glazed window in a black metal frame with antique catches. With the walls of Duff's farmhouse more than two feet thick and rotten lintels needing to be replaced, the bill for six windows has been £20,000.

If your house is old, however, it may be possible to get an improvement grant for such costly but beautiful alterations.

## Where to get help

Many period houses are in Conservation Areas. The local authority conservation officer is a good source of free advice on local craftsmen and grants and has powers to stop ugly alterations.

Most towns or counties have a historical society. Michael Waddingham found the one in Stroud, Gloucestershire to be an astonishing source of knowledge.

If your home is listed you will need Listed Building Consent for window alterations.

The Original Box Sash Window Company, The Joinery, Unit 10, Bridgewater Way, Windsor, Berks SL4 1RD; 01753 858196.

The London Crown Glass Company supplies glass for period buildings. Its customers include the National Trust and English Heritage; 01494 871966.

Ventrola, based in Harrogate, but with franchises elsewhere, specialises in renovating and draught-proofing old windows; 01423 567004.

John Fidler of English Heritage is organising a conference, "Framing Opinions", at Fort Brockhurst, Hants, in February. Call 01705 580068.

## Househunter

Oucherotte, near Dijon, France



Number One Railway Cuttings is a line that still takes tourists by steam train past the front door. The only other way to get there is in an all-weather vehicle. It has four rooms plus a shower, a water well, septic tank and half an acre of land surrounded by wooded hills. Heating is by wood, cooking by wood and gas and lighting by paraffin lamps. A generator, water pump and electric saw are included in the negotiable asking price of FF97,000 (£13,000). Contact In The Sticks 01434 381404.

## For What It's Worth

The eminently sensible Scottish practice whereby the seller rather than the purchaser of a property carries out a structural survey is being recommended by agents south of the border for properties in poor condition. The Surrey based agents Curchods says it speeds up the sales process and gives buyers less room to negotiate the price down. Executors are generally more willing to see the virtues of the scheme than people selling their own home, according to Curchods' senior partner Andrew Dewar. He is selling a three-bedroom Victorian terrace in Guildford, needing total refurbishment, for £65,000 rather than the normal £95,000 because of the work revealed by a full set of structural reports. "The vendors agreed it was important to attract only those people who have a real interest and the financial ability to undertake a lot of work," Mr Dewar said.

## Who's Moving

Nick van Hoogstraten, the American producer of the forthcoming West End show *The Fields of Ambrosia*, has rented a flat in St John's Wood, London. He took the two-bedroom flat in Hamilton Terrace the day after Chestertons put it on the market for £350 a week.

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**Honey fungus:**  
it lurks in the  
soil and pounces  
on the sick  
and elderly  
Photograph: Brian  
Carter / Garden  
Picture Library

Leaving the garden to its own devices leads to many discoveries, but eventually you have to show it who's boss. By Anna Pavord

In another part of the garden I grows in semi-shade, though it does not flower quite so freely in those conditions. You do not need to split and replant as frequently as you do with bearded iris. Only when the centre of the clump has died out completely do they need attention. Then you drive a spade into the clump to detach the best growths round the edge and replant them in soil that has been refreshed with bonemeal. They look good with hostas and ligularias.

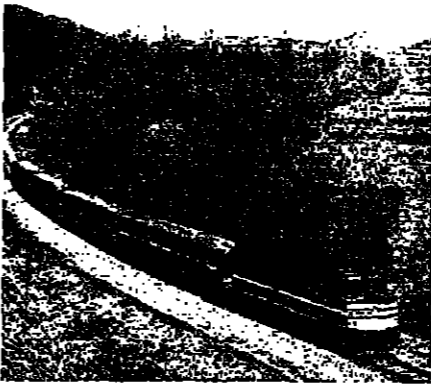
New Year. Include at least three things you have never grown before.

Keep house plants dryish and potted bulbs dampish. Clear out the greenhouse and if you are going for the solid gold, hallmarked halo, clear and oil all gardening tools. Weekend Work will return at the beginning of March.



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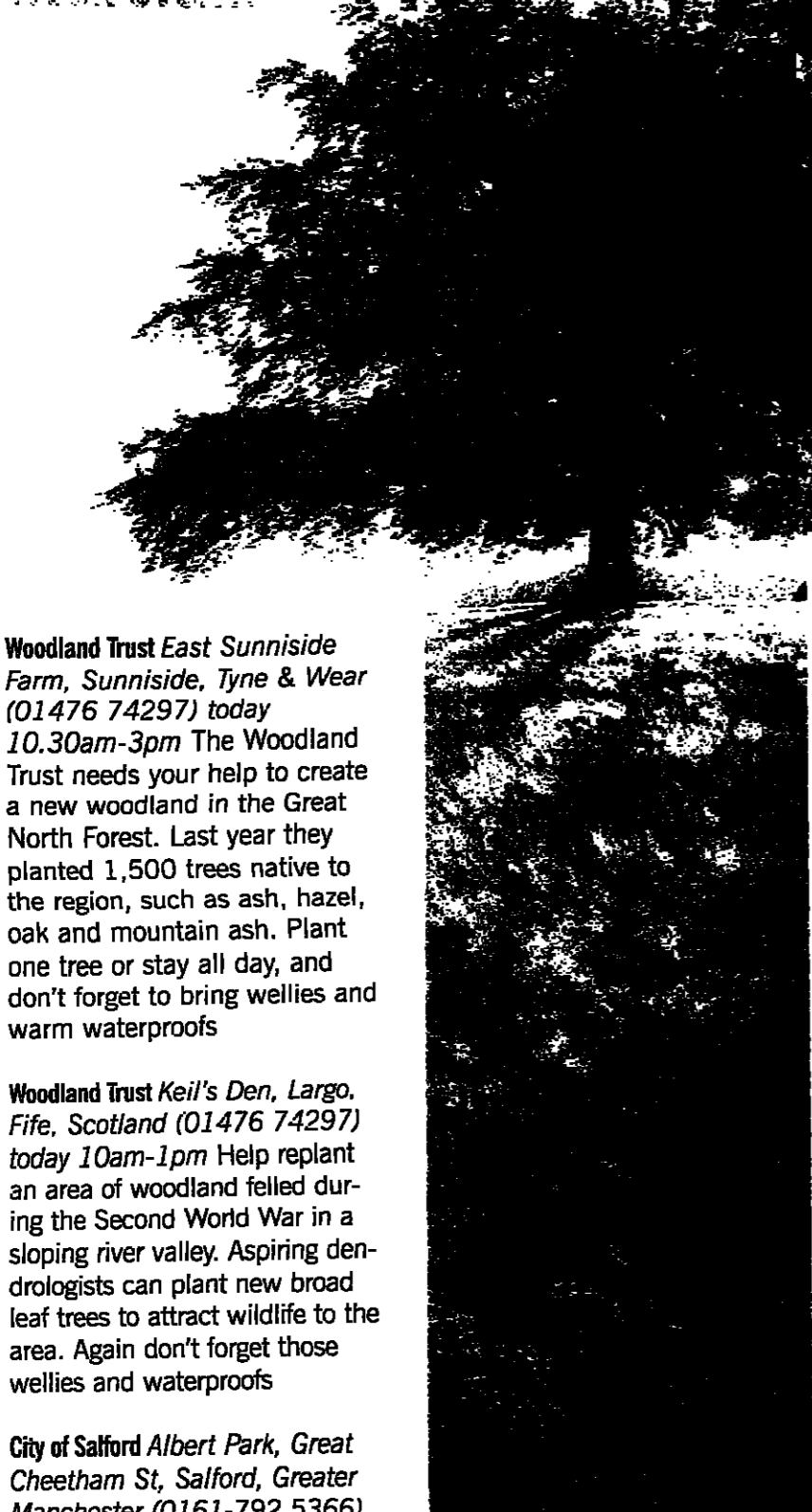
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going out

## Win of the 1980 National Tree Planting Award



**City of Salford Albert Park, Great Cheetham St, Salford, Greater Manchester (0161-792 5366).**  
**Sun 10am-4pm** An old-time community Tree Fest takes in events for the whole family. Displays include an exhibition of tree surgery, woodland fungal foray walks, and woodland birds of prey demonstrating their prowess. Kids will be able to let rip on a bouncy castle and ride shire horses

**British Trust for Conservation Volunteers Llangernyw Church Yard, Clwyd, Wales (01244 810989)**  
today 11am A chance to celebrate the granddaddy of Yew trees – this one is 4,000 years old which makes it the eldest tree in Wales and one of the oldest living things in the world

**Cleveland County Council Three Horseshoes Pub, Cowpen Bewley, Cleveland (01642 530784) Sun 10.30am-12noon**  
100,000 new trees have been planted on a 250-acre site at Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park over the last year. Tomorrow the public is invited to help plant about 200 new oak, ash pine and cherry trees along with a selection of shrubs on this infant woodland

# Things to do,

In a letter of their own

One hundred years of Rugby League will be the focus of a new exhibition, "Gladiators and Thunderbirds", starting at Wakefield Museum this weekend. The timing of this centenary celebration is of particular significance, in the light of Rugby Union's recent endorsement of professionalism. Both codes may now be about to experience further evolution, but in the meantime this exhibition provides the perfect opportunity to learn how one national sport, Rugby Football, was ravaged by internecine conflict until a split became inevitable and Rugby League was born in 1895


The exhibition looks at all aspects of the game, from the explosive issue of broken time (payments for players) which caused the breakdown of the Northern Union in 1895, to the ascent of the increasingly popular women's game. Moreover, players, amateur rugby league and supporters are all topics highlighted by the exhibition. Memorabilia will be on including ancient international caps, jerseys and photographs from the 1930 cup final.

**Wakefield Museum, Wood St, Wakefield**  
(01924 305350); open daily to 28 Jan, free

**film**  
**WEST END**

...and, *et cetera*, Lucinda

**LES AMANTS DU PONT NEUF** (15) Juliette Binoche as a woman who is living her life right. *Afternoon* (1994) 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834,

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**CINEMA**  
RYAN GILBEY

**Goldeneye** **Pierce Brosnan** is set up for another two Bond movies this one is successful. Though not in the same league as *Gold*, this rip-roaring thriller certainly makes amends for the past two Timothy Dalton snoozefests, as the gags are worse than ever.

**DON'T DRESS FOR DINNER**  
Royce Mills stars in the French farce, *Duchess* (Columbia TriStar, WC2) (11/1-14/1 9P/10p, 379-4441) @ Covent Garden, Mon-Fri 8.00, Sat 5.00, Su 4.30, [4] 3.00, ES-£18.50.

**FLAME THE FIRE**  
The musical of the hit film and TV series, *Company* (Earlham Street, WC2) (11/1-14/1 500P) @ Covent Garden, Mon-Sat 7.30, [4] 7.00, £10-£25.

**FIVE GIGS NAMED ROSE**  
Musical celebration of Louis Jenson, *Albany St Martin's Lane*, WC2 (11/1-16/1 17.00-22.00) @ 11/1-16/1 Lane Sq, Mon-Thru Sat, Fri & Sat 8.00 & 5.35, ES-£25.

**FURRY HONEY**  
Ray Cooney's latest comedy, *Flamenco* (Northampton Road, WC2) (11/1-17/1 11.00-11.30) @ Trafalgar Square, Mon-Sat 8.00, [5] 3.00, [7] 5.00, ES-£20.

**MURDER'S CHOICE**  
Lee McCracken in *Humble Braggins*, a comedy, *Lytic Shalaghway Ave* (11/1-14/1 505) @ Pac. Cinc. Mon-Sat 7.30, [7] 3.00, ends 3 Feb, Di-£24.

**THE HOUSEWIFE**  
Harold Pinter stars with Celia Imrie, *Comedy* (Fanton Street, SW1) (11/1-16/1 7.30-12.30) @ Pac. Cinc. Let's See, Mon-Sat 7.45, [5] 3.00, [7] 4.00, ends 2 Dec, £14-£22.50.

**MYSTERY**  
Revisit of *Tartan's* most famous sleuth comedy, *Dude of York* (3 St Martin's Lane 10/1-16/1 9.12-11.30) @ Lane Sq, Thru Sat, Mon-Sat 7.30, [11, 12, 14, 16] 7.00, ends 27 Jan, ES-£22.50.

**ROMAN DIES**  
Tom Stoppard's latest with Niamh Cusack, *Edinburgh* (Aldwych, WC2) (11/1-14/1 10.00-11.00) @ Barbican, Mon-Sat 7.30, [4] 7.00, ends 1 Jan, £10-£25.

**AN INSPECTOR CALLS**  
Stephen Dillards's stylishly-acted production of JB Prevelty's thriller, *Carmichael* (Crown Court, WC2) (11/1-14/1 505) @ Lyric Sq, Mon-Fri 7.30, Su 8.15, [4] 2.80, [7] 3.00, ends 1 Jan, ES-£24.50.

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**David Hockney** Will spend the last 30 years variety of media, he maintained the com draughtsmanship. The finest examples drawing by one of artists. *Royal Acad*

**JULSON**  
Brian Crowley is the Twentieth encounter.  
Fitzroy Place Victoria Street, SW1 (0171) 434 1313 BRV @ Victoria. Mon-Sat 7.30. [4/7] 7.30, 11.25-12.00.  
**LES MISERABLES**  
Musical of Victor Hugo's masterpiece.  
Palace Theatre/Venue Ave (0171) 434 99491  
@ Picc. Cir. Mon-Sat 7.30. [4/7] 2.30, 47-420.  
**BLACK & WHITE**  
Musical account of Mick Senegal's true life.  
Piccadilly Dramatic St (0171-369 1724) @ Picc. Cir. Mon-Sat 7.45, [4/7] 3.00, 11.50-12.00.  
**NAME**  
Elizabeth Mandell stars as Music Hall performer Marie Lloyd.  
Fortune Russell Street, WC2 (0171-936 2236) @ Covent Garden. Sun 7.30, 12.50-11.50.  
**THE MASTER BUILDER**  
Boris's intense look on an age-span relationship.  
Theatre Royal Haymarket, SW1 (0171-4931 9020) @ Picc. Cir. Mon-Sat 7.45, [4/7] 3.00, 12.00-11.45.  
**MISS SAIGON**  
Madam Butterfly novel in Vietnam.  
Theatre Royal, Drury Lane Catherine Street.  
[0171-474 5161] @ Covent Garden. Mon-Sat 7.45, [4/7] 2.00, 12.00-12.45.  
**THE HOUSETRAP**  
Agatha Christie's whodunit.  
St Martin's West Street, W.C.2 (0171) 8376 14411 @ Picc. Cir. Mon-Sat 8.00, [3/7] 2.45, [7/30] 12.00-12.22.  
**ROYAL NATIONAL THEATRE:**  
Olivier  
Maurice George and Ian Dalziel See Celia's Choice Today 2.15 & 7.15.  
Lancelotti  
Will Oates John O'Keeffe's 18th century comedy.  
Today 2.15 & 7.30  
Candace  
Skegitt David Hare's latest play.  
Last performances today 2.30 & 7.30  
Olivier & Lythell 47.50-12.25.45. Catherine  
[111-014.50]. They settle from 10.00. South  
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**Mother**  
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Oliver

**ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY:**  
*The Tuz*  
See it: New Deanes, Potter's religious drama.  
Today 2:00-6:15  
The Play 110-116, Barbican Centre, EC2  
[W-Tu-Sa 8:30-9:15] @ Barbican Mosaic.

**CULTURE**  
*Jim Dale* stars in Lionel Bart's musical,  
*London or Palladium* Apple Street, W.1 [W-Tu-  
Th-Sat 8:00-9:00] @ Oxford Ctr. Mon-Sat 7:30,  
[W-Tu 7:30, Thu 8:30].

**THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA**  
Andrew Lloyd Webber's Gothic musical.  
See *Phantom* Haymarket [W-Tu-Th-Fri 5:45-8:15]  
@ Pic Ctr. Mon-Sat 7:45, [W-Tu 7:30, Th-Fri 8:15]

**PIGGOED CATH BLOCKH**  
Musical parody of the cult TV series.  
Queen's Sheelagh's Avenue, W.1 [W-Tu 7:45-9:45]  
Sally @ Pic Ctr. Mon-Sat 8:00, [W-Tu 7:45, Th-Fri 8:45, Sat 8:15]. Mon-Sat 7:45, [W-Tu 7:30, Th-Fri 8:15]

**THE NEW OXFORD STORY**  
Musical biography  
*Winifred Whitehall* [W-Tu-Th-Fri 7:30-8:15]  
1111 Broadway @ Charing X. Tue-Thu 8:00, W-  
Sat 8:30, W-Tu 8:15, [W-Tu 8:15, Th-Fri 8:15, Sat 8:15]

**ROBERT STREEB LINDLEY HEALING**  
*Winifred Whitehall* [W-Tu-Th-Fri 7:30-8:15]  
1111 Broadway @ Charing X. Tue-Thu 8:00, W-  
Sat 8:30, W-Tu 8:15, [W-Tu 8:15, Th-Fri 8:15, Sat 8:15]

**THE SHAKESPEARE REVUE**  
Satirical Shakespearean revue.  
1111 Broadway @ Charing X. Tue-Thu 8:00, W-  
Sat 8:30, W-Tu 8:15, [W-Tu 8:15, Th-Fri 8:15, Sat 8:15]

**STANDARD EXPRESS**  
Lionel Bart's Brechtish folk-musical.  
Apple Street Avenue, W.1 [W-Tu-Th-Fri 7:45-9:15]  
[W-Tu 7:45, Th-Fri 8:15, Sat 8:15]

**SUSSET BOWLEND**  
Elaine Paige stars in Lloyd Webber's musical  
version of the Bible's David.  
*Adelphi Strand* [W-Tu-Th-Fri 7:45-9:15] @ Charing X.  
Mon-Sat 7:45, [W-Tu 7:30, Th-Fri 8:15, Sat 8:15]

**THEATRE**  
**DAVID BENEDICT**

Courage As Diana Rigg think this war has turned it of a flop." The evening, r. is a tremendous success, here's a salty translation to excellent score. Kent's directorates both heart and head.

*National Theatre, London*

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**TAKING SIDES**  
Ronald Harwood's drama.  
Carnegie Place/City Centre, W1 (071-369  
174-1); 168; P&C City, Mon-Sat 7.30, [4/7] 2.30,  
7-12.22.51.

**THREE TALL WOMEN**  
Africa's acclaimed play.  
Wyndham's Charing Cross Road, WC2 (071-  
561 172) Wed 8.07 (111) @ Late Sat, Tue-Sat  
8.00, [4/7] 3.00, dates 16 Dec, £3.50-£23.

**WHAT WHAT REMAINS**  
Robert Bolt's historical epic.  
Merrymaid Playhouse Dock, E1 (071-236 231).  
RHQ @ Blackfriars, Lat. Performances today  
3.00 & 7.30, [4/11] 1.50-£18.50, scenes available  
3.00, [4/11] 5.00, dates 6 Jan, £12.50-£25.

**TONGUE STYLES - MUST BE BURNED**  
Musical spectacular with a 23-strong company.  
Princess of Wales Coventry Street, W1 (071-559-  
5972) Fri @ Late Sat 8.00, Mon-Sat 8.00, [4/  
3.00, [4/11] 5.00, dates 6 Jan, £12.50-£25.

**THE WORD IN THE WILLOWS**  
Alan Bennett's version of Graham Swift's tale.  
Old Vic Waterford Road, SE1 (071-628 2016)  
BRHQ @ Waterloo, From today, Mon-Sat 7.30,  
[4/11] 2.30, 7.30, Tue, 2.30 (no mat 25 Nov), Wed  
6 Jan, 6.55-£24.75.

**THE WOMAN IN BLACK**  
Susan Hill's chilling ghost story.  
Theatre Royal Stratford East, WC2 (071-636 2230).  
@ Covent Garden Holborn, Mon-Sat 8.00, [4/  
3.00, [7/14, 20], £8.50-£20.

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**Beyond the West End**  
**London**

**HIGH ON THE THRONE**  
The Hebrew Theatre Tricycle of plays exploring  
Jewish experiences of WW2. Tue-Sat 8pm, all  
three plays Sun 5pm, 7pm, 9pm, dates 10 Dec,  
£10-£12, review £5, [4/11] £24, copies £25.  
New End, Heath St (071-754 002) @ Hampstead.

**RIVERSTONE STUDIOS**  
Anthony Neil Chapman Barrie Raitor's Northern  
Brooklands production. Sun 5pm, £10, open-air.  
@ Covent Garden Holborn, Mon-Sat 8.00, [4/  
3.00, [7/14, 20], £8.50-£20.

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## shopping

# The experts' guide to throwing a party



Mini hot dogs, 'Boom Shake the Room' and the Princess of Wales: just three essential party ingredients from the people who know. By Julie Aschkenasy

When people say that they don't like parties they mean that they don't like *bad* parties. But there is all the difference in the world between the boozey rugby scrum often entitled 'The Office Party', and one of those evenings that whizz by in a haze of fun and tasty drinks. But what are the actual ingredients that will make your party memorable? We asked professional party planners for some tips.

All agreed that the main ingredient of a good party is the people. Mr Chance, of The Chance Organisation, says "the best party is when people have something in common. They might work for the same company or have common goals." Philip Salmon, organiser of some of London's most hip parties, says you should think carefully about age groups: "People in their twenties don't want to see little kids at a party."

Mr Party-goer himself, Peter Stringfellow, believes that the Christmas party carries a special burden: "People have expectations because they might only go to a party once or twice a year," he says. "You can get problems with people who can't hold their drink. You also get what I call 'accountant guys' who play at being Rambo with the doorman [at Stringfellow's]." But despite this, you must keep the drink flowing. "You have to start with champagne, there isn't really anything else."

Louise Campbell of Bentley's Entertainments agrees that wines are important but thinks that soft drinks should not be forgotten: "Using elderflower juice instead of orange juice is far classier and looks just like champagne." Think carefully before serving punch as guests are rightly wary of its alcoholic content. Lady Elizabeth Anson

of Party Planners suggests something warming and festive like mulled wine and roast chestnuts.

Food is also a priority. It must be easy to eat with fingers, but this doesn't have to mean cheese on sticks and Twiglets. For a smallish Christmas gathering, Kevin Gould, caterer and owner of The Realfood Store, suggests freshly roasted hot almonds splashed with lemon juice and baked aubergines with their insides mashed with garlic, olive oil and sesame paste, served with pitta bread. A big bowl of shiny clematines with green leaves would provide extra decoration.

"The size of the venue is extremely important," says Sophy Morgan-Jones of party planners Shortcut. "If you have a place to fit 300 and only have 40 guests the ambience won't be right." Another consideration, often overlooked, is warmth, warns Louise Campbell. "The place must not be cold or all the guests will just want to go home. It is an absolute recipe for disaster, they will report back years later about that freezing party."

But the acid test of a good party is good music. Susie Parish from the Jonathan Seaward Organisation warns: "The worst thing you can do is hire a dance band that can just do covers... if at the end of the day you want the Rolling Stones, having some old guy just not quite making it is awful." Peter Stringfellow recommends "a fun mix of classic and dance music so there is something for all ages. I had the best-looking Elvis once, but he had an Oldham accent".

The Realfood Store, 14 Clifton Road, London W9 (0171-266 1162). For party planners' details, see right

## SIX PARTY VENUES

**Around the country**  
*Recommended by Charlotte Atkins, author of the Kronenbourg 1664 'Party Venue Guide' (£5.99, Good Books)*

**The Atrium, Edinburgh** (0131-228 8882). Atmospheric restaurant with railway sleepers for tables and the orange glow of oil lamps. A vast calico sheet is the "ceiling".

**The Hydrogen, Topsail Charters, Essex** (01621 857567). One of only a handful of surviving traditional East Coast vessels with huge sails. Operates along the Thames estuary. Holds 50 people moving, 100 if moored.

**Granada Studios, Manchester** (0161-828 5241). If three nights a week of "The Street" isn't enough, why not stage your party in the Rover's Return?

**Huntsham Court Hotel, Huntsham, Devon** (01398 361365). Gothic country house hotel with baronial candle-lit dining room. The place is filled with antiques and stuffed animals, the bar never closes - it even has a marriage licence.

**Naworth Castle, Brampton, Cumbria** (01697 73229). Within its fortified walls the Great Hall boasts a wooden vaulted ceiling, four heraldic beasts and Gobelin tapestries.

**Kew Bridge Steam Museum, Brentford, Middlesex** (0181-568 4757). A train spotter's dream venue centres around five Cornish Beam Engines set in a Victorian pumping station.

**London**  
**Bombay Brasserie Courtfield Road, SW7** (0171-370 4040). Grand colonial-effect conservatory with exuberant greenery and wicker chairs.  
**ICA The Mall, SW1** (0171-930 0493). Wooden floored party

spaces in classic Nash building.  
**London Zoo, Regent's Park, NW1** (0171-586 3339). Will serve drinks in the insect house, reptile house, elephant house or on the lion terrace.

**Queen's House, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, SE10** (0181-858 4422). No finer place for a masked ball than this opulent Palladian mansion.

**Blackheath Concert Halls, SE3** (0181-318 9758). Offers a choice of rooms, from the Victorian splendour of the great hall to a smaller recital room.

**Mermaid Theatre, Puddle Dock, Blackfriars, London EC4** (0171-236 1919). Views over the Thames from the River Room and the Blackfriars Room.

## SIX PARTY DRINKS

*Cocktails suggested by Harvey Nichols, Fifth Floor Restaurant*  
**The Fifth Floor Smash Fresh** strawberries blended with fraise liqueur and Cointreau, topped up with champagne and garnished with a strawberry.

**Cordiglietti Campari, Cinzano Bianco, Vodka Citron and Cointreau** garnished with a twist of orange.

**Mistletoe Hennessy cognac** shaken with orange juice and Blue Curaçao with a dash of egg white, garnished with mistletoe.

**L'Aird Bells whisky, Kahlua, ginger wine, shaken and strained into a Martini glass.** Float with double cream and grate a coffee bean on top.

*For the morning after:*  
**Absolutely Fabulous** Champagne, orange juice, a shot of Stolichnaya.  
**Virgin Mary** Tomato juice, lemon juice, Lea & Perrins, salt, pepper, celery salt, Tabasco.

## SIX PARTY EATS

*Shortcut suggest their best and worst party food. Mini is in, and warm where possible. Out goes anything crumbly or greasy.*

**In:** Mini hot dogs and hamburgers; mini croissants filled with scrambled eggs; baby mince pies; baby baked potatoes with sour cream; sushi.

**Out:** Sandwiches with curled edges; chicken legs; spare ribs; sausage rolls with flaky pastry; vol au vents; Christmas cake

## SIX PARTY RECORDS

*Richard Allinson, Early Breakfast voice of Capital FM, suggests these "guaranteed floor fillers"*

**"Jump Around" - House of Pain**  
**"Boom Shake the Room" - Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince**  
**"The Bomb" - The Bucketheads**  
**"Jingo" - F K W**  
**"Let me be your fantasy" - Baby D**  
**"U Sure Do" - Strike**

## SIX PARTY TOYS

*The most popular Christmas party buys at The Non-Stop Party Shop, 214-216 Kensington High Street, London W8*

**Party bombs** Shower guests with gifts and jokes (from £6.99)

**Rocket balloons** Four-foot long balloon screeches round the room (15p)

**Santa hats** (£1.99), curly wigs (£5.99) and beards (£6.99)

**Santa costumes** (Hire or buy, from £25)

**Airwalker balloons** Metallic Santa-shaped balloons with arms and legs that walk around the room (£14.99)

**Christmas flashing light earrings** (£6.99)

**SIX PARTY ORGANISERS**  
*All prices by application*

**Party Planners** (0171-229 9666)  
**Lady Elizabeth Anson** and co dream up tasteful, up-market parties. They can do as little or

as much as required, from sending out invites to masterminding a themed £100,000 corporate bash.

**The Jonathan Seaward Organisation** (0171-386 0066) Can deal with any party request, from recreating Christmas on the moon (the dance floor was turned into a massive crater) to the popular Arabian nights theme. At the moment elegance is in, for example masked balls.

**Shortcut** (0171-352 4448) Sophy Morgan-Jones and her team will arrange anything from two tequila girls and a magician to a Christmas party featuring 4,000 Father Christmases. Can provide inspiration for themes, venues, food.

**Bentley's Entertainments** (0171-223 7900). Themed parties are a speciality of Bentley's. They once recreated the Orient Express in a hotel - each room was a carriage representing a different destination.

Entertainers can be arranged: such as Santa strippers, magicians (Fay Presto is on the books) and hypnotist Paul McKenna.

**The Admirable Crichton** (0171-733 8113) Organised the Goldeneye bash last week: the party took place in a vast red tent erected inside the Imperial War Museum; lookalike Russian soldiers were posted outside with Kalashnikovs. They also did the Rob Roy film launch in a marquee on 10 levels set over a river. Glass cut-outs on the floor revealed fishes swimming underneath and a waterfall cascaded on each level. They will also turn their hand to smaller parties.

**Chance Entertainment** (0171-376 5995) Will organise a drinks party for 30 people, a corporate Christmas party for thousands

or simply provide you with a band. Mr Chance plays drums with their own The Chance Band. Past party themes have included creating an Indian palace or the Big Top, which incorporates circus acts.

## SIX PARTY BANDS

*The six most booked bands at Jonathan Seaward Organisation party planners (0171 386 0066)*

**Too Darn Hot** Latin-American style band with female singer. Brings Southern feel to a mix of Sixties, Seventies, Eighties and Nineties hits, with bongos and sax.

**As Is Rock** and roll-ish band led by husky-voiced female singer plays covers.

**Lord Colwyn's Band** Well established dance band. Alpha Connection Young well choreographed dance band with shirt-ripping finale.

**The Big Town Players** Energetic five-piece band.

**The Grabamphones** Very English nostalgia band playing songs from the Twenties and Thirties.

## SIX PARTY GUESTS

*We asked 'Hello!' magazine for their six dream party guests*

**The Princess of Wales** "because of her ultimate glamour, major crowd pulling power and top ticket price potential".

**Tara Palmer-Tomkinson** "friend of above, young and glamorous".

**Ned Ryan** "everybody's favourite Irishman and good friend of Princess Margaret".

**Joan Collins** "the ultimate movie queen".

**David Hockney** "For his genius, charm and consummate craftsmanship".

**Mick and Jerry Jagger** "Grandfather of rock, glam couple".

## six of the best party dresses



**1 Next, £59.99**  
Black shiny corset dress in 100 per cent polyester. Also available in full length. A strong fashion look that harks back to past collections from Gucci and Prada. This is a lovely dress, although the shape is not suitable for all body shapes: the waist and hips can look a bit thick. From branches of Next and Christmas mail order. Enquiries on 01162 849424



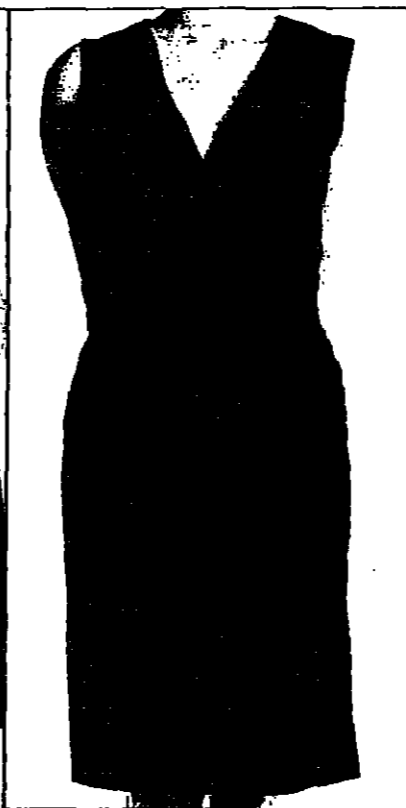
**2 Pearce Florida, £380**  
Satin-backed crepe dress with asymmetric hemline and straps. This is a definite show-stopper from one of Britain's most exciting young design duos, who recently won the New Generation Designers of the Year award. From Liberty, Regent Street, London W1 and Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, London SW1. Enquiries on 0171-734 0123



**3 Wallis, £49.99**  
Glitter halter-neck dress in 94 per cent acetate and 6 per cent Lycra. The Lycra content means that this dress has a certain amount of support, but still should only be worn by those with a Barbie doll figure. Very slinky, and very good value for money. From Selfridges and branches of Wallis nationwide. Enquiries on 0181-910 1333



**4 French Connection, £100**  
A sweet, non-threatening velvet dress which most of us could feel reasonably confident in, if not drop-dead sexy. The neckline is very neat and comfortable to wear. From Selfridges and branches of French Connection nationwide. Enquiries 0171-580 2507



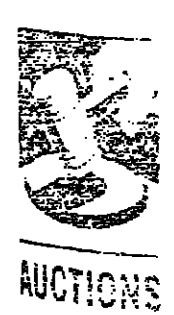
**5 Nicole Farhi, £199**  
Very elegant velvet shift dress with deep V-neck. Has a cool, sophisticated look, with a sexy edge due to the side split and plunging neckline. Bodyskimming rather than clingy. From Nicole Farhi, 158 New Bond Street, London W1 and 6 Market Street, Manchester. Enquiries on 0171-499 8368



**6 Hearts of Oak, £95**  
Black sleeveless shift dress in stretch needlecord from the diffusion line by Ally Cappelino. Quite a casual piece that can be worn for day or dressed up for night. From Ally Cappelino, 95 Wardour Street, London W1. Enquiries on 0171-488 9777

Photographs:  
Andrew Lamb  
Stylist:  
Charlie Harrington

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flowers  
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first floor  
madam



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# Christmas: where to get away from it all

By Simon Calder

**S**anta stands tall. Seven feet high, the jolly red giant towers over a scrum of children playing around his outsize boots. Even in countries where Christianity is very much a minority sport, travellers find it hard to avoid Christmas festivities. Perhaps St Nicholas should be called Farther Christmas.

This particular figure of festive fun presently resides on a street corner in the firmly Hindu city of Jaipur, but these days his likeness pops up all over the place. St Nicholas could challenge St Christopher for the role of patron saint of travel. He is grinning hirsutely at me right now from the side of a coffee mug I won in an apple-ducking game at a Christmas party thrown by Buddhists in Thailand two years ago. The carols on that occasion were sung with enormous enthusiasm, but they need to hone their game skills or they'll find tourists grabbing all the prizes.

Like it or lump it, Christmas drives the travel business into a frenzy as we desperately strive to be moveable for the feast. Even an airline called Scrooge Airways or Air Humbug would fill all its seats in the third week of December. Travel operators take full advantage of our Yuletide yearning to be reunited with – or located as far away as possible from – our nearest and dearest. The more frantically you phone around travel agents in search of a flight, the more fares which you would dismiss as extortionate during the rest of the year acquire an aura of moderation. The same phenomenon benefits less fashionable airlines: Aeroflot becomes an attractive prospect when the Russian airline is the only way to reach Lapland or Lima.

Travelling on Christmas Day itself can enhance your humour. While many short-haul flights are cancelled, long-range ones operate as normal. Peak season ends at midnight on 24 December, and for the ensuing week fares are reasonable and availability good. Fly west to stretch the day: a trip to Tinseltown, California will extend your Christmas to 32 hours.

If your funds do not stretch to flying, you will find hitch-hiking easier on

25 December than any other day of the year. This is just as well, because almost all public transport in Britain closes down for the day. Even Eurostar is shutting up shop, with the last departure from Waterloo through the Channel Tunnel to Paris at 7.23pm on Christmas Eve and the first train back at 8.13am on Boxing Day. If you fancy a cut-price Christmas cruise, then the best option is the Poole to Sandbanks ferry in Dorset, operating 8am-6pm on 25 December.

You may, of course, be joining the pre-Christmas rush in order to find somewhere that is unlikely to be troubled by ruddy-nosed reindeer. Scrooge would be happiest in a country that is Islamic, or Marxist, or both. Libya would be ideal. Cuba used to be a sound second best, but the reforms introduced this year by Fidel Castro (in an outfit of revolutionary red, he'd make a passable Santa himself) mean kitsch Nativity scenes are on sale for the first time since the President abolished Christmas 30 years ago. The Orthodox nations of Ukraine or Russia could offer an unorthodox way to dodge the festivities: Christmas is not celebrated until early January, by which time you can have returned to the land of DIY warehouse sales.

If Turkey, Goose Bay (Canada) or plain old Brussels are off the menu this December, apply plan B. Buy your travel-related gifts from the selection below, get in a couple of old Judith Chalmers videos and the *Independent* Christmas travel quiz (to be published on 23 December), and make a New Year's resolution to book ahead for '96. Or dig deep into your stocking for some crisp and even £10 notes, and start chasing some of the many happy returns at the bottom of Santa's flight case.

## Long haul

Controlling your Christmas spending may be easier in an all-inclusive resort, and the long-haul specialist Tropical Places (01342 825123) has secured some space in Kenya – departing from Gatwick on 17 December and returning in time for New Year's Eve. The price of 13 nights at the Turtle Bay Beach Hotel in Watamu is £919.

To spend Christmas with one in five of the world's population, Bridge the World (0171-911 0900) has availability on 16 and 20 December on BA's non-stop flights to Beijing. The price is a festive £420 return including tax. The same fare applies to Taipei.

Christmas is largely ignored in Japan, but a number of Buddhist "temple markets" take place around Tokyo in December, with crafts, antiques and junk on sale. The Japanese National Tourist Organisation in London (0171-734 9638) can provide full details of venues, and events such as the spectacle in Katsugake on 10 December, when 200 naked youths will plunge into the Nagara River for purification.

## Europe

The P&O flagship *Oriana* is celebrating her first Christmas with a cruise departing Southampton on 22 December, and reaching Madeira in time for the New Year's Eve fireworks display. If you want to find out if Santa does funnels as well as chimneys, be warned that the vessel is fully booked, but P&O (0171-800 2222) is taking names on the waiting list. To make certain you reach Madeira, an alternative is a 12-night holiday departing 22 December with Cadogan (01703 332661), for £579 including flights from Gatwick.

For the first time this year, shops in Amsterdam are opening on Sundays in the run-up to Christmas. Amsterdam Travel Service (01992 456056) has packages to the city from a range of UK airports.

Finlandia (0171-409 7334) is offering one-night breaks to Lapland for £529 on 2, 9 and 22 December including husky and reindeer driving and a snowmobile trip. If you wish to lodge a post-Christmas complaint with Santa, a three-night New Year holiday in Lapland costs £699, departing 30 December.

Wallace Arnold (0113-263 6456) has some availability on its full-board coach holidays in Europe. Five-day trips departing on 23 December are available to Paris and the Champagne region (£299), Calais (£279) or the Belgian town of Turnhout (£279).

If the thought of the Christmas party season is as

daunting as the event itself, then take cheer that the year of the preposterously cheap package tour is not over yet. First Choice (0161-745 7000) has packages from Gatwick to Spain or Malta on 12 December, costing £99 for a week.

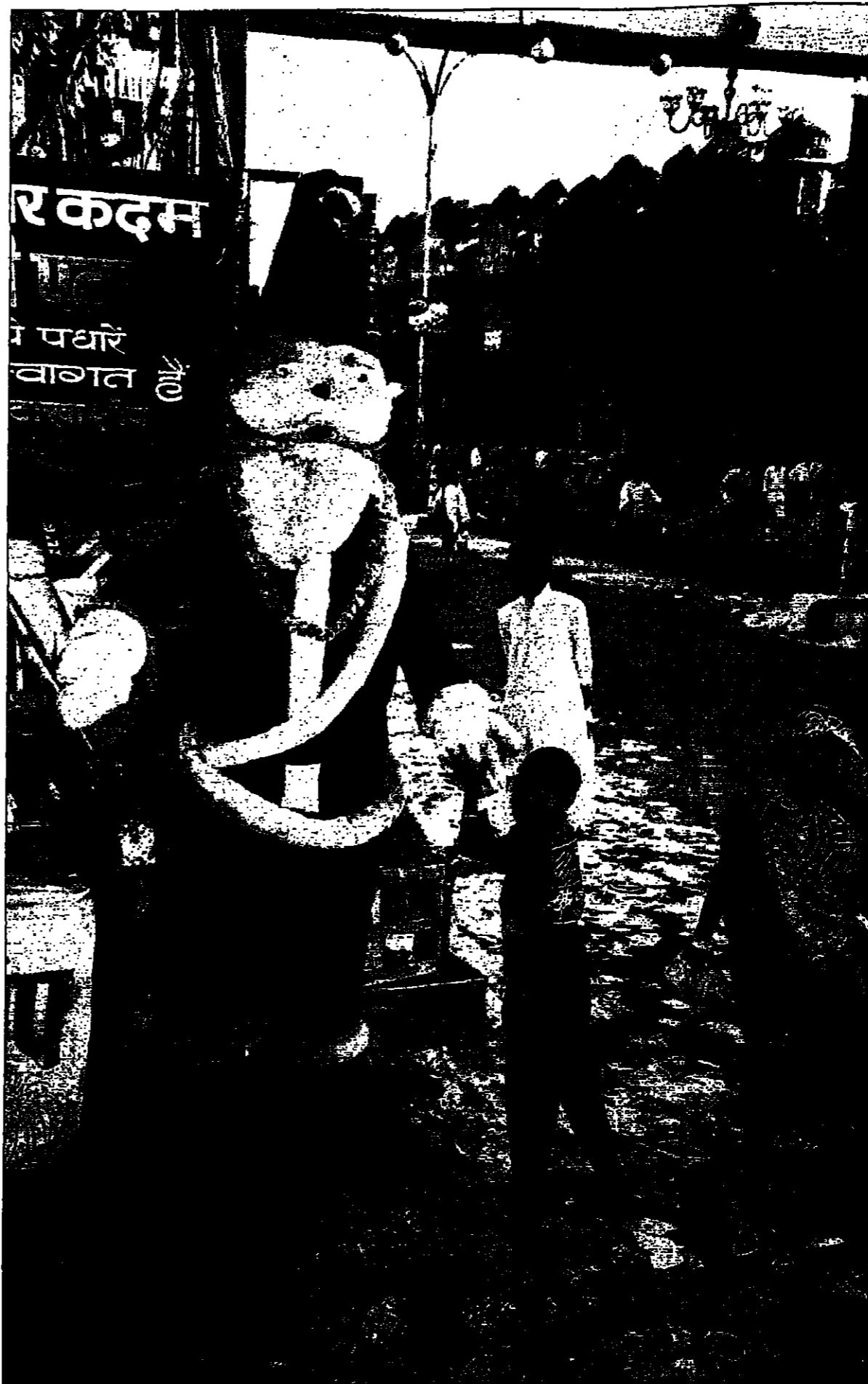
## Britain

"Stuff the Turkey" is the title of a week's walking holiday in the Peak District organised by Old Furnace Walking Holidays (01538 703331) starting on 23 December. "We're aiming the holiday mainly at single people, and want to show that going for a long walk and having a pub lunch is a perfectly good way to spend Christmas Day. We aim to make it a seven-day party", says John Higgins, the Walk Leader. The cost of £275 includes accommodation in guest houses, guided walks and minibus transport.

Dukes Hotel in St James's, central London (0171-491 4840) has a Christmas party to the Boxing Day race meeting at Kempton Park as part of its three-night luxury break, price £550. At the Leicestershire country house hotel of Stapleford Park (01572 787522), you can sample riding, falconry or clay-pigeon shooting on 26 December. The three-day holiday costs from £602 per person.

The YHA of England and Wales is offering Christmas holidays at 17 youth hostels. Three days in Matlock, Derbyshire costs £89 for an adult and £69 for under-18s. Bakewell is £4 cheaper per person, and includes a Boxing Day picnic at Chatsworth House; call the regional office on 01629 825850. Embury steam railway near Skipton, North Yorkshire (01756 794727) is one of several private railways that are running "Santa Special" trips before and during the holiday.

The Christmas in Britain programme from Shearings (01942 824624) offers holidays at resorts such as Fishguard (five days, £253) and cities like Durham (five days, £304). The Queen's Speech is a central feature of these holidays. Humanist Holidays (01242 239175) organises holidays for agnostics and atheists. December places are full, but Easter bookings can be made in the New Year.



You'll have to go a long way to avoid the trappings of Christmas – further than the Indian city of Jaipur, for a start. Photo: Simon Calder

## PRESENTS FOR TRAVELLERS

Preparing for the worst is a prevalent theme among the festive offerings for travellers. Rob Ryan's book "Stay Healthy Abroad" (Health Education Authority, £5.95) outlines the animal, vegetable and mineral threats that reside beyond these shores. A similar precautionary note is sounded by the Streetwise map of Orlando (£2.95), which shows areas of the Florida city where there is a distinct possibility. Travellers venturing into still riskier territory may be grateful for a short-wave radio; the SW1E from Sony (around £150) is the same size as a packet of cigarettes and potentially a lot better for you.

Should the object of your benevolence be the sort to get stuck up the Orinoco without a paddle, he or she may be grateful for your presence. Practical help for adventurers is available from Safariquip, which supplies a range of defensive measures from a money belt (£2.99) to a water filter (£54.99). British Rail no longer issues gift vouchers, presumably because demand was at best limited. But the international coach operator Eurolines (0990 143219) has just introduced gift vouchers in denominations of £10 and £20 – two of the latter would be more than enough for a London-Paris return for a

person aged under 25. Airlines do not sell gift vouchers, but they offer the next best thing: the Miscellaneous Charges Order (MCO), which looks like a ticket and may be used in full or part payment for a journey. It can be made out for as little as £5, though these days so small a sum will buy you only the departure tax on flights within Europe – and Kenneth Clarke may increase that in Tuesday's Budget. Giving someone an entire holiday as their Christmas present may seem a wonderfully generous idea, but you need to ensure that the recipient has a valid passport – the British Visitor's version

expires on New Year's Eve. Long-haul destinations may require jabs, too, which could rather take the edge off the surprise. If travel has become just too arduous, the latest offering from Rough Guides may oblige. Devoted to those whose idea of surfing is strictly digital, the "Rough Guide to the Internet" (£5) can take you around the World Wide Web. And for those who feel it is better to travel vicariously than to arrive, a subscription to Wanderlust magazine costs £15. Safariquip: 01433 62032. Eurolines: 0990 143219. MCOs from any IATA airline. Wanderlust: 01753 620426.

## INDEPENDENT READERS' OFFER

### 3 Dwarf Acers

Japanese Acers are the true aristocrats of the acer family. Slow growing, they are perfect specimen plants for the small garden and excellent in ornamental containers. Happiest in partial shade on humus-rich, well-drained soil which does not dry out completely and sheltered from wind and frost.

The Acer collection on offer consists of one of each of the following 3 varieties:

Acer palmatum Dissectum - Rounded shapely bushes. Turns bronze yellow in the autumn. Grows to approx. 2ft with 4ft spread.

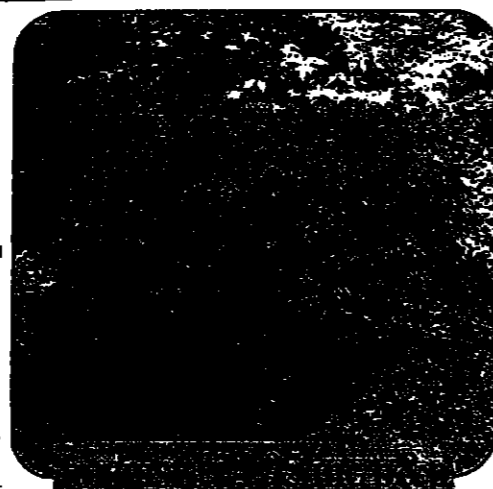
Acer palmatum Dissectum Garnet - One of the most reliable of the newer forms, it has a spreading habit and finely-cut leaves of crimson purple. Grows to approx. 4ft with 5ft spread.

Acer palmatum Bittersweet - Medium sized upright shrub. Cream-pink margins on grey-green leaves that turn red in the autumn. Grows to approx. 6-10ft with 6ft spread.

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**M**ost skiers who are planning to escape to the mountains for Christmas will by now have made their arrangements (as well as their excuses to those they'll be leaving behind). But for those who have left it late – and particularly for those who have not done it before – here is a guide to a successful Christmas on skis. What to expect: Don't count on finding a particularly festive atmosphere in the resort; as in Britain, Christmas in the Alpine countries is more of an occasion for family gatherings than for communal gaiety. If you're going to an hotel, make sure you know what to expect. A constant round of parties, or nothing beyond crackers and paper hats? Where to go: Are you looking for excellent skiing or a Bing Crosby-style winter wonderland? If skiing is the priority the odds are you'll do best in a high resort in France or western Austria which will catch storms borne on the westerly winds.

Large-scale snowmaking is a comforting fallback in case we get one of those bright, cold, snow-free spells that were such a problem in the late 1980s. You should also look for trees that will offer some shelter if snow arrives in quantity. For a combination of all these attributes, Courchevel takes some beating.

## Snow's Up

By Chris Gill

If sleigh-bells beckon, you'll want evergreen trees rather than the bare slopes of Val Thorens or the dead-looking larches of Saas-Fee. And you'll want the pitched roofs of chalets rather than cuboid

apartments. Sleigh bells themselves are normally to be found only in low valley villages that present too high a risk of a shortage of snow. What to take: For families, Christmas presents the problem of presents. Maybe you're prepared to hump mountain bikes halfway across Europe; maybe not. If not, and you're in the market for a pricey chalet holiday, you may wish

to know that The Ski Company (0171-730 9600) will ship your presents out to your resort and back again. The only other bit of advice I would give to skiers accustomed to February holidays is to be prepared for extreme cold. Be careful about resorts that rely heavily on chair-lifts; mid-air rides can be very chilly. Late availability: Earlier this week many tour operators

still had Christmas holidays on offer. Examples: hotels or self-catering in Andorra with Panorama (01273 206531); chalets in Zermatt, Courchevel and Val d'Isère with Ski Scott Dunn (0181-767 0202); Courchevel with Finlay – £50 off (01835 830562); Val d'Isère or Méribel with The Ski Company (0171-730 9600); Méribel with Snowtime (0171-433 3336).

## An Inaugural Offer

### 7 NIGHTS AT THE VICTORIA FALLS FROM £515.00

In December we shall commence the first of our flight series from London Gatwick to Lusaka for the magnificent Victoria Falls. Here the weary traveller will find accommodation and sights that not only surpass that of other areas but probably offer a greater sense of being "anywhere else on earth."

Not surprisingly David Livingstone, when he stumbled across the Falls in 1855, remarked that "sights so lovely must have been gazed on by angels in their flight." The Victoria Falls is a marvellous place both to relax in a temperate climate and to use as a base from which to explore with visits to the Falls themselves and the little town of Victoria Falls. In addition you may take a Zambezi cruise, enjoy local and regional game viewing in Hwange or Chobe (Botswana) with much besides.

On a selected number of departures we are making available just 20 seats at a special inaugural offer of between £515 and £595 for a 7-night stay at the comfortable, 4-star "The Smoke that Thunders" Hotel, Living-



stone, the closest hotel to the Falls themselves. It has air-conditioning, a garden, swimming pool, two restaurants and bars and all bedrooms are comfortably furnished with ensuite bathrooms.

This offer represents a saving of many hundreds of pounds from the original tariff and is available only on a strict first-come first-served basis. Interested travellers should therefore contact us as soon as possible.

#### DEPARTURE DATES & PRICES

1996 per person in a twin  
Jan 2, 9, £515  
Jan 16, 23, £525 - Jan 30, £535  
Feb 6, 13, 20, £545 - Feb 27, £555  
Mar 5, 12, £565 - Mar 19, 26, £575  
Apr 2, £595 - Apr 9, 16, 23, 30, £575  
Single room supplement £160  
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Taxi/transfer return flights, road transfers, 7 nights' accommodation on a bed and breakfast basis, services of a local host. Not included: travel insurance, airport taxes, tipping. All prices are subject to change.

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## travel france

## WEEKENDS AWAY

## It's still possible to spend a Saturday in Paris without spending a fortune

By Harriet O'Brien

It's enough to make you wince. There's Paris – galleries, tree-lined boulevards, great curvy buildings, enticing shops transforming your purchases into exciting-looking packages – now a simple, three-hour train ride away from London. Perfect, you might think, for a Christmas-shopping weekend, buying on the Saturday and ambling around museums on the Sunday. But then there's the franc: the exchange rate, just a shade over Fr7 to the pound, brings you down to earth with a bump.

Yet if you treat Le Shopping as a sightseeing tour in itself – as a voyeur more than a buyer – you'll see a great deal of the city, and you needn't come away completely empty-handed. Here are some suggestions for getting the most out of a Saturday in Paris without spending a fortune.

Arm yourself with a carnet of 10 Métro tickets and start the day near the Opéra, a short hop from the Eurostar terminal at the Gare du Nord. Two of the city's biggest department stores are on boulevard Haussmann (Havre-Carmartin Métro). Built at the turn of the century, number 40 is the huge, domed fashion emporium Galeries Lafayette, crammed with

a dizzying array of boutiques and an equally dizzying number of shoppers. Squeeze your way past the wacky hat stalls on the ground floor (where there are normally a few special offers) and make for the perfume hall under the dome. As you take in the expensive smells, gaze up at the gilt and stained-glass dome and the glinting Belle Époque twirls.

If you haven't had your fix of stained-glass domes, make your way to Au Printemps (64 boulevard Haussmann). This series of three large buildings linked by walkways dates from 1865 and is classed as an historic monument. Hovering above the Café Flo on the sixth floor of La Mode (the fashion house) is the magnificent dome itself (added in 1923). Don't, however, succumb to the comforts of a coffee here: press on to the household section, La Maison, and make for the ninth-floor roof café. You can have coffee and pâtisseries in the warmth of its small greenhouse-like building or, for added frisson, join the shivering pigeons outside on the terrace. Either way, you'll get some of the best views of Paris, looking over to Montmartre in the north and the Eiffel Tower to the south.

Then head south yourself, tak-

## Six of the best markets in Paris

**Rue Mouffetard (Monge Métro).** This ranks at the gourmet end of Paris's 70 food markets. A great place for charcuterie and exotic fruit. Open Sat, Sun, Tues a.m.

**Rue de Buci (Mabillon Métro).** This small, colourful food market runs Sat, Sun, Tues. There's a particularly good pâtisserie stall.

**Marché aux Fleurs, place Louis-Lépine, (Cités Métro).** Plenty of freshly cut flowers. Pretty, popular, this runs daily, with a bird market on Sundays.

**Marché aux Puces Clignancourt (Porte de Clignancourt Métro).** Europe's biggest flea market opens at 8am Sat, Sun, Mon. There are more than 2,000 stalls selling anything and everything. Get there early.

**Puces de Montreuil (Porte de Montreuil Métro).** Clothes, shoes, furniture: you might have more of a chance of finding a bargain at this smaller flea market. Open Sat, Sun, Mon.

**Marché aux Livres, Parc Georges Brassens (Porte de Vanves Métro).** Second-hand and antiquarian books; occasionally you can find a first edition. Runs Sat, Sun.

ing a brisk walk down rue Tronchet to one of the finest sights in Paris, the food shops around place de la Madeleine. **Marquise de Sévigné (no 32)** specialises in chocolates, and in displays that are a positive art form. **Fanchon (no 24-30)** is probably the most famous, and most famously expensive, of the city's food shops: the windows filled with pâtés, petits fours, and glacé fruits are a gourmet feast for the eye. **Hédiard (no 21)**, across the way, is equally sumptuous and marginally more affordable. Best of all is the little **Maison de la Truffe (no 19)**: delightfully old-fashioned, very welcoming and seriously pricey. Its truffle-related specialities range from tins of foie gras with truffles at Fr235 (£32) for 130g, to truffle vinegar at Fr45 (£6) for 125ml.

Having whetted your appetite, set off in search of more affordable food, pausing on the way to look at the flower market by the steps of St Madeleine. You could simply head back to Galeries Lafayette and its large, very serviceable food store next to the main building – on the first floor above Monoprix. But to see more of Paris, take the Métro to Sévres-Babylone where you'll find the

city's oldest department store, **Le Bon Marché**, whose internal iron structure is said to have been the work of Gustave Eiffel. Its food store is huge, with a good wine selection and an excellent deli (good brie de meaux Fr18 or £2.50 for 200g) – many Parisians maintain it's the best supermarket in the city.

You could pause here for a quick, light lunch at the café, but for a more leisurely meal make for the area around St-Germain-des-Prés where there are innumerable little restaurants. For literary appeal try **Les Deux Magots** or **Café de Flore** on boulevard Saint Germain (St Germain Métro), once favourite haunts of Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre.

No trip to Paris would be complete without a visit to a specialist cheese shop, so after lunch head for the rue de Grenelle (rue de Bac Métro): **Bathélemy**, at no 51, is stocked with well over 200 varieties, its Auvergne range being something of a speciality. Still on the cheese trail, take a trip over to Hôtel des Invalides (La Tour-Maubourg Métro) where, a few streets away at 12 rue du Champs-de-Mars, **Marie-Anne Cantin** has a wonderful range of properly ripened, truly French

farmhouse fromages.

Then, a real treat: determined window shoppers should dip into the genteel, clipped-poodle world of the 16th arrondissement. Take the Métro to Passy and stroll up rue de Passy glimpsing into the designer shops (Gerard Mabe at no 37, Nadine Samson at no 52). Pause at the spacious perfume store **Sephora** (no 48), where, among the likes of Chanel and Dior, you can buy aromatic own-label soaps for Fr15 (£2); and at L'Entrepot next door, a loft-style shop selling an eclectic mix of reasonably priced goods from bundles of candles (Fr88) to waistcoats (around Fr300). But the place you're really heading for is **Franch et Fils** (no 80), a small, stoically old-fashioned department store with designer labels, thick-pile carpets and hushed voices. You probably won't want to buy anything here, but this is the voyeur's ultimate shop.

Heading back into central Paris, stop for tea and pâtisseries at one of the cafés spilling out into the tree-filled place de Passy. Here you can plan a gentle Sunday of gallery gazing, when you probably won't see as much of Paris – but then you've only got four Métro tickets left.

## FRENCH FARES

## Paris

A day-trip on Eurostar from Waterloo to Gare du Nord costs £95 if you book 14 days in advance. Make a weekend of it, and the fare drops to £87. Add-on fares are available from stations on the main lines from Manchester and Edinburgh.

There are dozens of flight options at prices competitive with Eurostar if you stay over Saturday night. For example, Air UK (0343 666777) has a weekend fare of £107 from Leeds/Bradford or £67 from Stansted.

The train and SeaCat service from Charing Cross to Gare du Nord takes five and a half hours, compared with three on Eurostar, but costs only £59 return.

Accommodation: the French tourist office publishes a list (in French) of over 1,400 hotels, classified according to *arrondissement*. The following are small and comfortable hotels in attractive areas, costing around £50 per night for two people: Marais, 2 bis rue Commines, Paris 3 (48 87 78 27); Place des Vosges, 12 rue Birague, Paris 4 (42 72 60 46); Centre, 24 bis Rue Cler, Paris 7 (47 05 52 33).

## Calais

The fares war continues. If the £1 day return on Stena Line (01233 647047) from Dover is too pricey, then buy the ticket through a branch of Going Places for only 99 pence. Or check for offers from P&O European Ferries (0990 980980), Hoverspeed (01304 240241) or Le Shuttle (0990 353535). If you want to take a car, Stena charges £10 every day except Saturday, when the price is £20.



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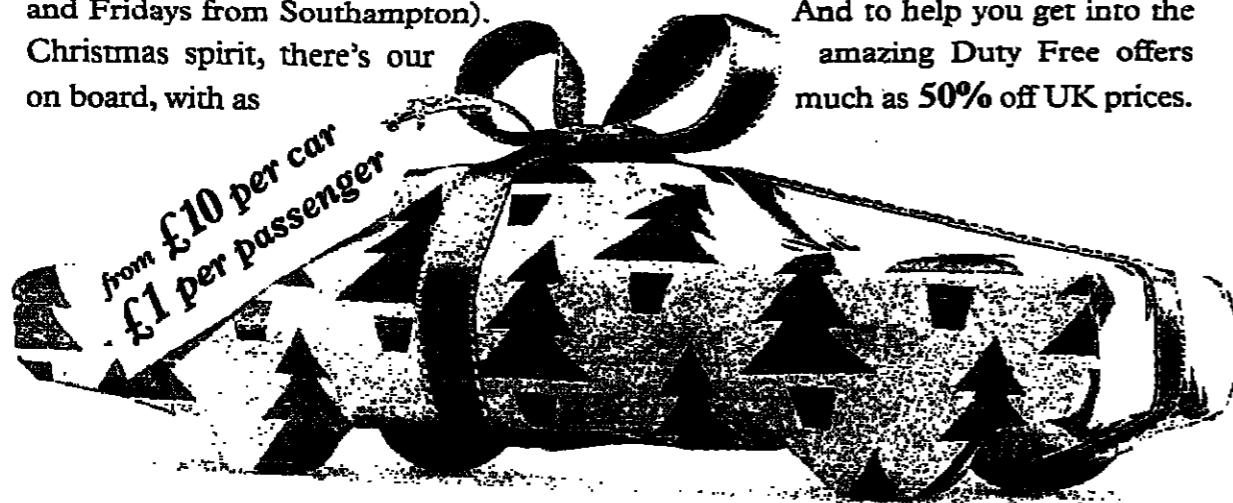
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In Calais Serena Mackesy enjoyed fruits de mer, diabolio menthe, shopping and high camp. Phil, meanwhile, has a hangover

would be to avoid drinking before lunch time. But most of all, don't forget your passport. I know we hear a lot of touchy-feely EC guff about global villages and

Calais itself, though, is a delight. There's something so fecund about French provincial towns with their permanent "soldes" signs and the faint whiff of

On rue Jean-Pierre Avron, with a fine view of the container port and the stalls where the little shellfish boats sell their catch, is Le Grand Bleu fish restaurant. The one drawback about this

Meanwhile, in the "old-style English pub" opposite the theatre the boys were pumping it up. Gangs of blokes don't generally go on day trips for the culture, of course. We, mind you, didn't do a whole lot ourselves, apart from a quick wander round the Hotel de Ville, a classic of camp embellishment with so many twiddly bits that you expected a giant

As we disembarked, we hung back and spoke to the driver. "Sorry," said Claire, "I hope it's not always like that." He did that "beauugh" kind of shrug that only the French can accomplish. "Pas tous les jours," he said.



something  
to declare

### Trouble spots

This week's advice from our man in the Foreign Office

"The Trans-Siberian Railway is noted for smuggling. Search your compartment for contraband before the journey commences and, thereafter, secure the door.

"Areas bordering on Siberia, Pakistan, Vietnam, Laos and Burma are poorly policed. Drug smuggling and related crimes are on the increase in Yunnan. The Karakoram and Khunjerab pass routes can be hazardous and lawless."

**"Due to the unstable security situation we advise against travel to Somalia."**

*Foreign Office travel advice: dial 0171-270 4129, check page 564 on BBC2 Ceefax or access the Internet, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/>*

### VISITOR'S BOOK

Darjeeling tourist bureau

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- *Ronan Letort, France*

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– *Simon Bullivant, London*

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**— Maria Cardoso, Melbourne**

It's a shame to see how every square inch of nature in and around Darjeeling has been converted into a rubbish tip. Queen of the hills? No: Queen of the Waste  
- *Illegible, Brussels*

Travel companies have begun their battle for the hearts and grants of students. The 1996 *STA Travel Guide* includes the best of the *Independent's* Eat Your Way Around the World competition, plus tips on flying, reading and drinking across the globe. STA has also produced *Hip Hops: a Guide to Happening Cities in Europe and America*, which suggests visits to Robert de Niro's bar in New York and Jim Morrison's grave in Paris. Campus Travel is giving away *In Touch: the*

***Rough Guide to Student Travel***, recommending booking a hammock on a trip up the Amazon or tracking gorillas in Uganda. Publications are free from respective branches of these companies.

A second airport has been added to the American blacklist. The FAA has posted signs at all US airports warning that security procedures at Manila's international airport cannot be relied upon. The warning against Lagos airport remains in force.

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Spain

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## Travel

# Advertising

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## An awfully big adventure

The Taklamakan Desert  
by Charles Blackmore  
Main photo: Keith Sutton  
Inset photo: Charles Blackmore

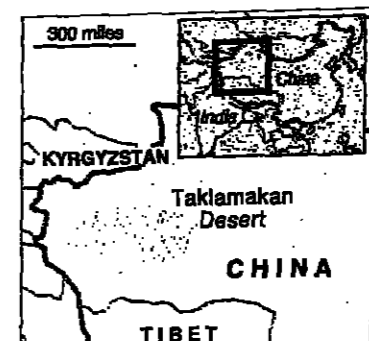
The Taklamakan Desert is one of the last unexplored places on earth. It is also one of the most dangerous. Charles Blackmore crossed it, and lived to tell the tale.  
By Angela Lambert

There are very few awfully big adventures left and very few awfully British heroes. Late Victorian and Edwardian children's stories used to specialise in them – modest men in solar topees; laconic chaps with a gentle streak and a chivalrous manner towards women. They always had fair hair and keen blue eyes (the hair was bleached by the sun and the eyes narrowed by squinting into far horizons). They were part of the unspoken superiority complex of the British Empire, inculcated in the nursery by books such as Conan Doyle's *The Last World* or (my own favourite) *Jack of the Bushveld* by Sir Percy Fitzpatrick. These days you no longer find such men in fiction, let alone in real life. Or so I thought, until I met Charles Blackmore: ex-Army officer, mer-

chant banker, but above all, intrepid explorer. Blackmore's great adventure consisted of leading an Anglo-Chinese expedition across one of the last unexplored places on earth, the Taklamakan desert in western China. Its name means "once entered you never come out" but local people call it the Desert of Death. He recalled the dangers and exhilaration of that amazing trek, for his benefit, one golden Sunday morning in the calm drawing-room of his family house in Hampshire. The team he led was composed of four Britons (one of them, the party's medical officer, a woman); an American photographer; four Chinese, 30 camels and six camel-handlers. It later turned out that the "camel-handlers" had never handled a camel before, but were long-

distance lorry drivers: a misunderstanding that could have cost everyone their lives and certainly jeopardised the expedition's success. This mixed bunch set out in October 1993 to cross 800 miles of the world's least hospitable desert and Charles Blackmore's mesmerising account of their journey has just been published. At the time he was Major Blackmore, about to leave the Army after 14 happy years in the Royal Green Jackets. He launched on the expedition for fun, to fill a gap in his life, to prove something. Why, I asked. "I had always assumed I'd spend my life in the Army. I was about to become lieutenant-colonel and suddenly I felt I wanted to see who Charles Blackmore was, outside all that. It was a tremendous gamble. Tina [his wife] was pregnant; we were in the middle of moving house – and I threw everything up in the air. Our world changed and the only thing I could hang on to was my ability to get this expedition off the ground. The chances of its success I put at about 50:50; the chances of coming out alive about 60:40. Tina felt very strongly that I wouldn't come back. Nobody had ever done that route; we went into it blind. In the event it took 59 days to cross the 800 miles from west to east, and the desert was very kind to us."

Anyone reading his extraordinary account of that crossing will wonder at the use of the word "kind". The team suffered unrelenting, not to say undignified, hardships: dysentery, extremes of temperature from 110°F to -40°F; severe thirst and dehydration; the loss of part of their precious water supply. "The desert was kind," Blackmore explains, "in that when we were at the limits of our own endurance and the camels had gone without water for seven days, we managed to find water. We didn't experience the Taklamakan's legendary sandstorms. And we never hit the raw, biting desert cold that would have totally immobilised us."



"Tina was remarkable. I didn't realise at the time how much I'd put her through. She was very brave and I couldn't have done it without her back-up. At the lowest points of the trip I was very conscious of my responsibility towards her and my three sons. As the journey went on I felt the fear of them growing up without me, and I couldn't bear the thought. But I'd had a dream and I wanted to see it through."

"Inside me..." and here at last he comes close to answering my initial question, "there's a man struggling to find peace with himself. When I doubt myself now, I go back to the thought of the desert and think, well, we managed to pull that together. As a personal achievement, I feel prouder of that expedition than of anything else I've done. Yet in terms of a lifetime's achievement I think having three sons and bringing them up in a happy way – against that yardstick, the desert does not measure up; does not compare."

Has Charles Blackmore found peace? "No. I yearn for the challenge – for the open spaces – the purposefulness of it all. We were buoyed up by the sense of purpose. I find it difficult now to be part of the uniformity of modern life."

'The Worst Desert on Earth' by Charles Blackmore is published by John Murray at £16.99

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The great thing about investment is that you don't have to know why you are right to be right. Some say the success of the chartists this year is a fluke. But there is no doubt they are having a good run

This is turning out to be a truly bumper year for equity investors on both sides of the Atlantic. With the Dow Jones index bursting decisively through 5,000 for the first time last week, it now looks likely that Wall Street will produce one of its best returns of all time this year.

The market is up 30 per cent already and there is no sign of an end to the giddy upward momentum. It is more than five years, a record 61 months, since the US market last experienced a 10 per cent correction. The market has risen 1,000 points in barely nine months.

In London, meanwhile, the FTSE 100-share index continues to be pulled along in America's wake, with the Granada/Forte bid the latest in a string of big corporate takeovers that is also helping to keep the market buoyant.

Note that the bull market in London is still more of a "blue-chip" phenomenon than anything else. While the Footsie has been reaching new all-time highs, the All-Share index, which includes smaller companies as well, has not risen quite as rapidly.

Bull markets of this sort naturally tend to make everyone happy, but nobody is happier, this year, than the UK's

army of technical analysts. Frequently derided as charlatans by professional investors, this hardy band of enthusiasts, who look for trends in stock market prices, has been having what for them is a quite wonderful year.

While fundamental investors have tended to worry about how high the markets have risen on conventional valuation measures, most chartists have correctly argued that the bull market in both equities and bonds looked set to continue. They spotted early on that the trend this year was a powerful one with plenty of momentum behind it.

In earlier columns, I have highlighted the views of Robin Griffiths, the chartist at the stockbroker James Capel, whose charts and models have helped him to call the markets outstandingly well all this year. He for one will not have been surprised by the latest surge on Wall Street, which he has consistently predicted. He remains fundamentally positive about the short-term outlook for both the UK and US markets.

Given how well chartists generally have been doing, this seemed an opportune week to catch up with someone who can justifiably claim to be one of the doyens in the UK. Until he set up his own boutique in the early 1980s, Brian Marber



JONATHAN DAVIS  
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was a broker who regularly topped the chartist section of the annual analyst rankings. Although the bulk of his business now comes from analysing currencies (where technical analysis has long been much more widely accepted than in the stock market), he continues to call the trends across the market spectrum.

A lively and talkative man who speaks out ideas in a seemingly endless stream, Mr Marber has no illusions about what technical analysis can and cannot do.

He points cheerfully to research that shows that, in currencies, technical analysts tend to be right half the time whereas fundamental analysis only comes up with the right answer 40 per cent of the time. His philosophy is that it is bet-

ter to be right for the wrong reasons than vice versa. Nobody, in his view, should pretend that calling the market right all the time is practically feasible. The best that anyone can hope to do is to catch the best part of a significant price movement.

Investment is a game of being right more often than not; and the golden rule for chartists is to be brave enough to avoid giving a firm view when the charts have no obvious message.

On Mr Marber's desk is a quotation from Winston Churchill: "There is no sphere of human thought in which it is easier to show superficial cleverness with the appearance of superior wisdom than in discussing questions of currency and exchange." I also liked another aphorism from Mr Churchill that "the potential for loss when gambling on certainties is enormous".

What technical analysis can do, and do very successfully in my experience, is help to spot developing trends and keep track of them. The aim is to keep aboard bull market runs and out of downward trends. For example, Mr Marber claims that nobody who followed technical analysis could or should have suffered the way many professional investors did when bond prices

fell sharply in February 1994. The risk of an extended fall in bond prices was evident from the shape of the charts.

That may well be true. But, in my experience, the trouble with many chartists is that they are often their own worst enemies - too much jargon and bogus science, too little common sense and plain speaking. An irritating trick of the trade is the habit of inserting so many qualifications to any firm view about the market that it ceases to have much value.

Mr Marber is naturally alive to such accusations, having heard them many times before. His weekly faxes and commentaries are not short of the often baffling lingo in which chartists love to indulge. (A sample from last week: "Stochastics were falling and unless bottom reversal candles intervene, last week's top reversal candles have caused trips previously arranged to the upper Bollinger bands to be cancelled".)

But Mr Marber is simplicity and clarity itself about the direction of the main markets themselves. He remains very bullish about both the London and US stock markets, as he is about bonds too. "We all know," he says, "that the bull market is mature, that it has risen very sharply and very quickly and that it 'won't last

forever". But so far there is no sign of the trend running out of momentum in his daily charts and, until that happens, his conviction is that the bull market is firmly in place.

Mr Marber is also a keen follower of the so-called Coppock indicator, a technique for spotting changes in the direction of markets, named after a devout Episcopalian whose church asked him to work out a formula for deciding when to increase its investment exposure.

Once a Coppock indicator has flashed, it is followed on average by a significant market rise over the next 11 to 14 months. The indicator flashed for the UK market in April this year and, if history is any guide, it will now carry the market up to around the 4,200 level by next summer.

You don't believe any of this? A surprising number of investors do and it pays to keep an open mind in this game. As Mr Marber says, the great thing about investment is that you don't have to know why you are right to be right. Some will say that the success of the chartists this year is a fluke. But there is no doubt they are having a good run; and if the bull market in London and New York continues for much longer, they will be vindicated still further.



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## The pick of the pension plans

The difference in pay-out on identical investments can be 50 per cent. By Clifford German

The fact that the past is no real guide to the future is the single most important fact of life in personal finance. It is not much consolation, however, in choosing a personal pension, where the difference in pay-out on an identical investment can easily be 50 per cent and you might not find out until it is too late to change your mind.

To help guide investors looking for unit-linked pension plans, actuaries Bacon & Woodrow (which does not recommend with-profits pension plans to clients) has subjected 180 funds with a full five-year record to a series of tests.

By awarding points for good

performance in each three-month period, the 90 funds that had improved the value of the fund least were eliminated.

The survivors were tested again to select those that appeared in the top two quartiles most frequently and in the bottom quartile least often, which eliminated another 32 funds. A third screening eliminated 18 funds whose performance was most volatile.

The remaining 40 were ranked according to their performance in each quarter and over a 12-month moving average. Another four funds were eliminated for showing a declining performance trend.

At this stage, Norwich Union had four funds in the list, Friends Provident three, Clerical Medical, London & Manchester, Prudential and Standard Life two each. The 36 survivors, run by 27 different providers, were again tested to screen out funds containing less than £20m, those not dealt through independent financial advisers, those not open to new members, those with no enhanced nil-commission option, and those that apply penalties to all transfers and early retirements.

This eliminated a further 18 funds. The remaining 18 were tested for the effect of their

charging structures, based on assumptions drawn up by Bacon & Woodrow.

The results show significant differences, with charges on the dearest funds twice those of the cheapest. Disclosure has already shifted the emphasis away from initial commission charges to level commission charges. But nil-commission policies, where the intermediary charges a fee for advice rather than a commission, are the best. Over 20 years, the fund would be 11 per cent greater in a nil-commission policy, assuming investment performances were the same.

The results still varied con-

siderably between providers and different types of pension plans and some undisclosed charges of up to 0.5 per cent a year may remain. For recurring single premium policies, however, Standard Life, Norwich Union and Sun Life came out cheapest. For transfer payments, Standard Life and Norwich Union outperformed the rest. Equitable Life dominated individual rebate-only plans, and Norwich Union, Standard Life, Equitable Life and Gartmore featured in the regular contributions category.

The implications of performance-testing, backed by information of charging structures

required by the new disclosure rules, will increase the competition between pension providers. Charges are already falling, according to B&W partner Andrew Warwick-Thompson, but providers have had to reduce administration and distribution charges in order to do that.

That can only be done by investing in powerful and expensive computer systems, which will concentrate the personal pensions market in the hands of a small strong elite. Financial advisers will also lose business, and within 10 years there will be few small local firms of advisers.

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## How to share the cost of care? New solutions for an age-old problem

By Clifford German



Golden oldies? The Budget is expected to ease worries about the cost of long-term care

Three fears haunt floating voters, and all focus on the possible loss of the family home. Homes are very much at risk if the breadwinner loses his or her job and has no mortgage protection insurance. They are at risk if the owner has negative equity and cannot move because the existing mortgage cannot be redeemed. And the message is steadily sinking in that homes and life savings are at risk if elderly owners need professional nursing care.

In some ways the last is the most distressing of the three worries because local authorities will only now pay the full cost of care once the individual's assets have been reduced to £8,000.

Professional nursing care at home for two hours a day can cost up to £6,500 a year, and a place in a residential home can cost anything from £12,000 to £20,000 a year per person, so charges can quickly swallow a lifetime's savings and the family home, leaving next to nothing for the children to inherit.

With this in mind the Chancellor is expected to introduce measures next week to try and ease the situation. The simplest and most immediate reform would be to increase the £8,000 threshold so that anyone needing care could keep a bigger nest-egg and still qualify for state help.

Measures to allow individuals to divert some of their pension funds to pay for nursing care may also be put forward.

An earlier attempt to offer a combined policy was launched by Cannon Assurance in 1991, allowing policyholders, subject to passing a medical examination, to surrender 10 per cent of their pension at retirement in return for a three or fourfold increase in pension if they subsequently needed professional care at home or in a nursing home. It was squashed in 1993 by the Treasury, but a change of heart could well be coming.

That, however, would not be enough to solve the wider problem of funding long-term care. Too few people have a big enough pension pot to provide a comfortable retirement, without tapping it for other purposes.

Only one man in four and

one woman in three presently ends up needing long-term health care, only one in six ends up in a home, and insurance from the five main providers, Commercial Union, PPP Lifetime, Eagle Star Life, Prime Health and Scottish Equitable European, is not exactly cheap.

Taking out a deluxe policy to provide an extra £10,000 a year for long-term health care with Commercial Union will cost £43 a month or a single premium of £4,750 for a 55-year-old male, and £48 a month or £5,400 for a 55-year-old female.

Not everyone can claim. Deluxe policies will only pay out if, in the judgement of the claimant's doctor, the individual fails at least two out of six tests: the ability to wash, dress, and feed oneself, get in and out of bed, move around on a level surface and use the toilet. Standard policies pay out on three tests.

If a claim is recognised, most policies will offer home help care first, with a place in a nursing home reserved for those who have failed more of the six tests.

Some existing policies also review premiums each year so that anyone on fixed income and in deteriorating health might well find that they can no longer afford to maintain their cover just when their need is increasing. To meet this problem, CU has just introduced guaranteed benefit levels for single-premium contributions on all new plans sold to over 65s.

With an ageing population, longer-term tax incentives on premiums may be needed to promote more private provision for future needs, although the Treasury presently takes the view that long-term health-care benefits are not taxable so premiums should not qualify for tax relief.

Other suggested stopgaps include exempting family homes from the £8,000 ceiling, the state paying the cost of nursing care, leaving individuals to fund residential charges, and private insurance policies funded equally by the Government and the individual.

The most interesting short-term option being promoted by Peter Lilley, the Secretary of State for Social Security, and Peter Gatenby, the top

actuary at PPP Lifecare, would be free nursing home care for anyone who has paid for the first three years of care from their own resources.

Limiting the individual's liability to pay to three years would enable providers of long-term health care to reduce the premiums by as much as 30 per cent, while the Government's financial commitment would be limited by the hard fact that the life

expectancy of men once they go into a home is not much more than three years, although women tend to survive longer.

The other main weakness of existing long-term health care plans has been the specialised nature of the product. If the individual dies before qualifying for care, there is no benefit at all.

Individuals who would consider long-term health care a

waste of money might well go for a policy that combined insurance with an investment plan that guaranteed a capital sum to the estate if the insurance element was not drawn.

Immediately after the Budget expect to see the first of a new breed of investment-linked insurance plans to try and encourage people to take up long-term health care. If the Chancellor has smoothed the path, so much the better.

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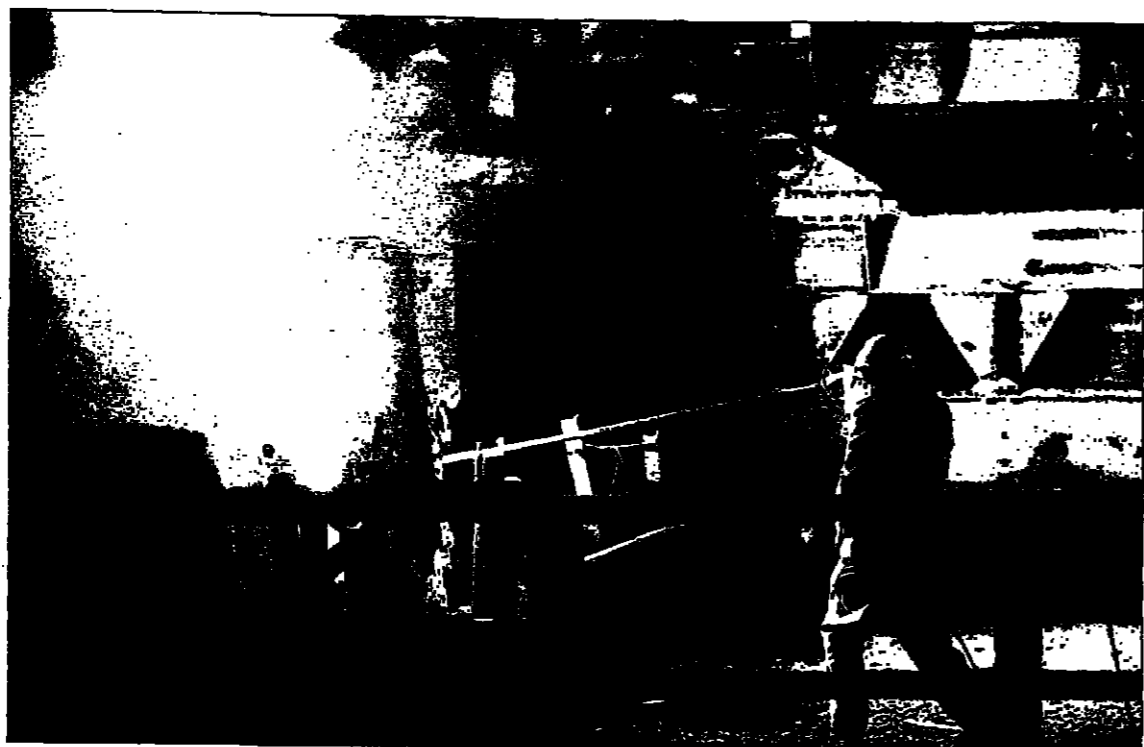
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## Advice for stock-pickers: buy what the market wants to sell



Good as steel: Contrarian Schroder is overweight in industrial stocks like British Steel

Photograph: David Rose

By Alison Eadie

**S**chroder Income Fund, Schroder's first unit trust, founded in 1968, is all UK and all equity. Its investment objective is to invest in shares that will increase its dividend income faster than the average dividend growth of the main UK equity market indices.

While the yield on the fund, presently at 5.1 per cent, is not high compared with fixed-interest securities such as corporate bonds, the potential long-term return is much greater than a bond fund because share prices tend to outperform bond prices. Meanwhile, it is well above the current average yield of 3.97 per cent on the top 100 shares and the 3.82 per cent average on the All-share index.

The narrow parameters make the fund sound a bit dull – no exotic Eastern markets, no whizzy financial instruments, no racy recovery stocks – but its disciplined approach is the key to consistency, according to its manager, Chris Rodgers.

"We do not slavishly go for high-yielding stocks as that is a cul-de-sac for performance," he says. The skill comes in filtering out the dross.

High yields can indicate that the market is overly cautious in rating the stock or can signal that the market thinks there is something unsafe about the company's future or takes a gloomy view of future profits growth.

"You have to respect the market," Mr Rodgers notes, while taking advantage of its imperfections. Now, he says, is a good time to buy high-yielding stocks, because there are some genuinely underrated companies on offer.

According to the Schroder house view – the guiding principle in Schroder investment decisions – the market has got it wrong. In the past few months the market has shunned income stocks and bought growth companies. It has chased consumer stocks in the expectation of Budget tax cuts but sold industrial stocks as UK economic growth slows.

Schroder believes the slowdown is just a mid-cycle stock adjustment and

expects growth to resume at 2.5 per cent to 3 per cent next year.

The income fund is therefore underweight in consumer goods and service sectors and overweight in industrial sectors, like engineering, where companies are boosting exports on the back of a weak pound.

British Steel is a classic example of an income fund play, Mr Rodgers points out. Its price-earnings multiple this financial year is less than five and its prospective yield is 6.8 per cent against an average for the market of 3.8 per cent.

The rating is derisory as the company is not looking over a precipice, but is typical of a cyclical stock at the peak of the cycle, he says.

The discipline in stock-picking is to select sensibly. "You beat the market by buying things in the short term that the market wants to sell," Mr Rodgers explains.

The implicitly contrarian approach leads in the long term to outperformance. "The total return on income-driven investment has historically beaten the market," Mr Rodgers claims.

The trigger for selling is usually when the yield drops below the market average, although the income fund does not rigidly follow this rule. It holds stocks for an average of three years and limits its range to a total of 90 companies. At present it holds 75 companies with 8 per cent in convertibles, bought as a cheap way into equity.

The strict formula of the income fund limits the prospect of picking spectacular winners or losers. However, Mr Rodgers points to Glaxo as an example of best practice.

The fund started buying Glaxo when drug stocks were out of favour due to worries over President Bill Clinton's health-care reforms and fears of a squeeze on margins from sales of generic drugs.

Glaxo suffered additionally from jitters over the expiry of its Zantac patent. Schroder started buying when the shares were below £6 and the yield 5.5 per cent.

The shares are now nudging £9 and they yield 4.2 per cent. Glaxo

Wellcome, as it is now, remains the fund's fourth-largest holding.

Timing is the key. Where Schroder gets it "wrong", Mr Rodgers says, is if it looks too far ahead when the market is preoccupied with short-term issues.

The income fund's overweight stance in property has proved a disappointment so far as recovery in rental growth has not come through as fast as expected.

However, vacant space is falling and property shares display wide discounts to net asset value and above-average yields.

The house policy is a fundamental, top-down view of the UK economy that prescribes which sectors are in and which are out.

Sector specialist analysts and fund managers, who divide into three stock teams looking at large, medium and small UK companies, then do the bottom-up stock picking.

For the medium to smaller companies the approach is "menu-driven" and fund managers select from a Schroder-approved list of up to 200 stocks.

Schroder is presently keen on financial companies because of their modest valuations and sensitivity to improving interest rate expectations. The income fund has almost 30 per cent of its assets in financials against their weighting in the FTA All-share index of 17.5 per cent.

Life insurance companies are the hottest favourites, with a weighting in the fund of 7.6 per cent against 1.9 per cent in the All-share. All the bad news on pensions mis-selling and sluggish sales growth is in the price, Mr Rodgers says.

The fund is also slightly overweight in medium to small companies in the belief that as long as the economy continues to grow they should perform well.

With new money continuing to flow in – the fund now has £230m under management – new buy ideas can be incorporated without the cost of selling the old.

Good yields on the leading stocks mean there is plenty of potential value to go for.



### loose change

#### TSB rolls over with Tessas

TSB is offering investors in Tessa the chance to roll over the maximum £9,000 of capital into a new Tessa and use the accumulated income (which cannot be rolled over) to start a TSB Pep, where income and capital will remain tax-free. The minimum Pep investment will be £500 but anyone who can combine a maximum £9,000 Tessa and a £6,000 Pep is offered a £150 discount on charges.

For the first five months of 1996 Fleming's and Save & Prosper are offering a five-year escalating-rate Tessa earning fixed rates, rising in steps from 6.5 per cent in year one to 9 per cent in year five. They will pay 7.5 per cent on existing Tessas transferred

from other providers until they would have matured.

HSBC Investment Bank has raised the rate offered on its new Tessa for 1996 to 5 per cent a year, plus up to 30 per cent extra linked to the performance of the FTSE 100 share index – a maximum return of 155 per cent on maturity equal to 9.16 per cent compound interest.

#### Flexible options from pension bonds

Albany Life has launched two new pension bonds: a five-year flexible pension bond, which allows clients to take early benefits without penalty, and a retirement income bond, designed for clients who have taken a lump sum from a pension scheme.

Cheshire Building Society is offering a new fixed-rate mortgage at 7.49 per cent

fixed until January 2001, with a £300 cashback on 90 per cent loans to value (80 per cent for remortgages).

#### Free dealing for National Grid shares

Yorkshire Building Society's stockbroking arm, YorkShare, is offering members commission-free dealing over the telephone for shareholders looking to sell or buy shares in the National Grid following next month's merger. Lifetime membership costs £5. Call 0800 736736 for details.

ShareLink, the execution-only stockbroker, is offering a free booklet, *How to Select and Use Corporate Bonds for a Personal Equity Plan*.

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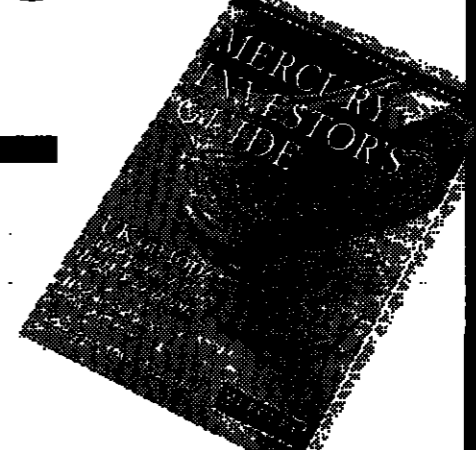
reduced to £30 a quarter plus VAT maximum and £4 plus VAT minimum on single-company Peps.

#### Cheaper home insurance for the Home Counties

Will House Hammond is reducing buildings insurance rates for properties in London and the Home Counties to £1.54 per £1,000 insured, which it claims will undercut the market by up to 50 per cent. It believes these areas were unfairly penalised due to storms and subsidence over the last decade.

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Neil Davidson discovered the hard way that a storm is more than heavy rain

## What happens when the ceiling falls in?

Household insurance may be less comprehensive than you expect. By Paul Gosling

In June this year the ceiling of Neil Davidson's Glasgow flat fell in. The property was well maintained, there had been no floods in the building that he knew of, and there was no obvious cause. Mr Davidson assumed that his insurance policy would meet the repair cost, especially when a survey commissioned by him concluded that the damage was caused by a leak from the roof.

Sadly for Mr Davidson, he found the protection of insurance to be less comprehensive than he assumed. A loss adjuster brought in by the insurer, Independent Insurance, concluded that there was no proof that the collapse had actually been caused by a storm or damage to the roof, and the claim was rejected. The loss adjuster had examined weather

records for June and there had been no storms registered that, in his view, would have caused the collapse.

Independent Insurance, when rejecting the claim, wrote: "The burden of proof of loss by a peril as described in the policy rests firmly with the policyholder and unless they discharge that proof then there are no grounds upon which to meet a claim under the policy." In plain English the policyholder has to prove the cause and effect for a claim to be valid.

Mr Davidson's father, Dr Campbell Davidson, has now referred the case to the insurance ombudsman, saying that where there is doubt the insurer should accept liability. "While one can sympathise with insurance companies," Dr Davidson says, "one also has to acknow-

ledge that claiming appears to be a particularly difficult procedure." He says it is unfair that the onus of proof should be on the claimant, particularly when they are refused access to the loss adjuster's report.

Dr Davidson says that he will in future consider more carefully what risks are included in a policy, and what perils are excluded. He also believes there should be a legal requirement on insurers to release the contents of any survey commissioned by them.

Malcolm Turling, spokesman for the Association of British Insurers, says this is often what happens. "There is no legal obligation to show the loss adjuster's report as it is paid for by the insurer. A surveyor's report is slightly different. If the insured has his own report and

there is any conflict it is not unusual to show the insured any conflicting information."

Mr Turling says that in practice it is usually up to the insurer to disprove that a claim was valid. Most claims are clear, he says, but one exception to this is with water penetration, for which it can be difficult to find the cause.

"You can end up with one expert saying one thing, and another the other, which goes to arbitration by the insurance ombudsman. That is a recognised arbitration system, provided the insurer is a member of the scheme, which most are."

Dr Davidson has now referred the dispute to the insurance ombudsman, and a spokeswoman for Independent Insurance said: "That is the complaints procedure which

should have been followed in the first place."

Michael Lovegrove, a spokesman for the insurance ombudsman, said: "The onus of proof lies with the policyholder. Water damage is a hoary old chestnut. We get lots of claims over this. The peril insured is storm. There is no precise legal definition of what constitutes a storm, but there is legal guidance, and it is more than just heavy rain."

"You often get a roof worn out, especially flat roofs, and it rains and gets damp and the insurer says there is no evidence of storm damage. When we look at this we do want to look at meteorological records; there has to be a specific storm on a specific day. Sometimes we do find in favour of the policyholder."

An insurer is also entirely justified in withholding the loss adjuster's report and survey, says Mr Lovegrove, since it is commissioned and paid for by the insurer.

"We would look at the policyholder's own report and survey. If we have doubts we may commission a report ourselves. This applies to any case..." he said.

## New lease of life

How the Leasehold Reform Act can be used to your advantage. By Ian Hunter

Dying (and selling) a leasehold flat can be a difficult task, particularly if lending institutions believe it to be a wasting asset not suitable for a mortgage.

Sellers can make their flats more attractive, however, by extending the lease before putting them on the market. The Leasehold Reform (Housing and Urban Development) Act 1993 gives leaseholders the right to extend their lease terms. To date, it has not proved to be the nightmare freeholders feared or the god-send for which leaseholders prayed.

Nationwide Building Society insists that before a mortgage is granted, the lease should have at least 30 years to run after the end of the mortgage term. Most other lending institutions have similar requirements. Abbey National will consider granting a mortgage on leases in central London that have a shorter term.

The legal position is that when the lease comes to an end, the property reverts to the landlord, although the option is open to the tenant to negotiate an extension.

The Leasehold Reform (Housing and Urban Development) Act 1993 provides, subject to the satisfaction of certain criteria, tenants of flats with leases of more than 21 years to run with the statutory right to a 90-year lease extension. Broadly, excluded flats are those owned by charitable housing trusts and properties where the landlord has been resident for at least 12 months and there are four or less individual flats in the building.

Tenants wishing to apply for a lease extension must serve notice on the landlord suggesting a premium in return for the lease extension. The landlord will serve a counter-notice either accepting the proposal or setting out counter-proposals. If the parties cannot agree a price, the matter will be referred to the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal.

The premium agreed is paid to the landlord together with his professional fees, which usually include the services of a surveyor and a solicitor. Andrew Scott, a surveyor and partner with London surveyors Lane Fox, explains: "The premium paid should represent the value by which the landlord's interest is reduced, plus the landlord's share of the so-called marriage value. The marriage value is the increase in the value of the flat following the lease extension. The freeholder is entitled to at least 50 per cent of this by way of a premium."

Mr Scott adds: "In some cases, landlords have been able to drag

matters out in order to deter tenants from using this procedure. As tenants are liable to pay the landlord's professional fees if the landlord can drag matters out by appealing decisions and challenging the tenant at every juncture, there is a hope that the rising professional costs will deter the tenants from proceeding. Landlords of large blocks of flats will often fight the first tenant who seeks a lease extension particularly hard. If they can establish a high premium for the lease extension, this will be used as a precedent for any other tenants who may subsequently submit an application."

Even if a leaseholder does not have a statutory right to a lease extension because the terms of the 1993 Act are not satisfied, it may still be in the landlord's interest to negotiate.

Part I of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 gives a tenant right of continued occupation after the expiry of the lease. The continued occupation may not give the landlord a reasonable yield on his investment and, therefore, he may be prepared to negotiate a lease extension.

Any tenant seeking to negotiate a lease extension should first establish the average term of leases in the area in order to determine whether paying for an extension is a cost-effective exercise. Madeline Simpson, an estate agent with London firm Sebastians, explains: "It may be perfectly sensible to buy a property with a 36-year lease in Belgravia as this is characteristic for the area. To chase a lease of the same length in other parts of London may be extremely unwise."

Ms Simpson says that in Fulham, west London, many clients will not consider a property with a lease life of less than 75 years. "We have one two-bedroom flat valued at £120,000 with 76 years left to run. The freeholder wants £7,000 in order to extend the lease term to 99 years," she says.

"In other cases the landlord is just not interested in negotiating. One client has a fantastic flat which, because it has less than 25 years to run, is simply unmarketable. The problem is the landlord lives in the flat above and does not want to grant an extension and the tenant does not have a statutory right to a lease extension."

Carolynn Davis, a property specialist with City law firm Druce & Atlee, comments: "If a landlord is prepared to grant a lease extension, the tenant should use the opportunity to address any areas of contention, such as repairing covenants and service charges."

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